

# **BSA Leave No Trace 101 Course Guide**



Prepared by  
BSA Leave No Trace Task Force

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## **BSA Leave No Trace 101** **Course Guide**

### **Introductory Guidelines for Instructors**

**Course length:** 3 or more hours, timing for each section is provided as a guideline only.

**Instructor:** Leave No Trace Trainer or Master Educator

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Knowledge of Leave No Trace and its seven principles
- Understanding the importance of Leave No Trace in outdoor activities
- Where to locate additional Leave No Trace resources and opportunities for further Leave No Trace training

### **Materials Needed:**

- Flip Chart or white board
- Markers
- A Leave No Trace ethics reference card (hang tag)
- BSA *Teaching Leave No Trace* manual (21-117) available for download off of BSA web site, [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org)
- BSA Leave No Trace Awareness Cards
- Props for specific Leave No Trace activities
- List of Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Venturing awards that involve Leave No Trace

In this Guide, information that is intended to be provided to the course participants appears in regular type face. Instructions for the Trainer (or Master Educator) leading the course are provided in *italics*.

### **Course Outline**

#### **Introduction and Welcome (10 minutes)**

Instructor and staff will provide content outline and expectations of the course. *(It is recommended that you try a brief icebreaker or game to warm up group before heading into next session).*

#### **Brief History of Leave No Trace (10 minutes)**

*The points below should be taught through a combination of lecture and questions and answers. Many BSA members are already familiar with some of the Leave No Trace message. Draw upon that knowledge to build their interest in learning more.*

The Leave No Trace concept is over 40 years old. Leave No Trace was formally conceived of by the National Forest Service in the 1960's. However, as public land use expanded and land

managers witnessed the adverse effects of this use, the Forest Service along with the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management developed early wilderness ethics practices.

In the late 1970s, the Boy Scouts and other groups began to introduce the concept of “minimum impact camping.”

By the mid-1980’s, the Forest Service had a formal “No-Trace” program emphasizing the cultivation of new wilderness ethics and sustainable no-trace travel and camping practices.

In the 1990s, the agencies formed an independent nonprofit organization called Leave No Trace, Inc. The organization, now known as the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics (the Center), was incorporated to develop and expand Leave No Trace training and educational resources, spread the general program components. Around the middle 1990s, the Boy Scouts began to introduce the language of Leave No Trace into its publications and program.

In 2005, the Center and the Boy Scouts of America entered into a formal agreement for the Boy Scouts to train its own Master Educators to further the Boy Scouts’ involvement in Leave No Trace.

### **The Need for Leave No Trace in Scouting (10 minutes)**

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. Leave No Trace offers a cutting edge approach to integrating Scouting’s ethical and decision making focus into the outdoors environment, providing Scouting members with a principled framework to assist in arriving at proper, ethical decisions in the outdoors. These practices apply to all outdoor activities, including those at Scout camps, camporees, and on all types of public or private lands.

As cities grow and populations encroach upon protected natural areas, we must do more than just pick up the litter and extinguish campfires. In 1992, combined visitation to undeveloped public lands was estimated at 670 million. By 1999, the National forest recorded 900 million visits, and the US Park Service had 287 million visitors. (Marion, 2001). As visitation continues to increase we must learn how to maintain the integrity and character of the outdoors for all living things. Leave No Trace is not simply a program for camping, it is the cutting edge of Scouting values. Learning about Leave No Trace begins with you and your unit, in your backyard, and even inside your home.

The knowledge and concepts enabling visitors to leave no trace are easily taught both before and during outings. This course is devoted to helping you understand and pass on the value of natural areas and the methods we can use to help protect and conserve these areas for future generations.

*Ask the participants to identify areas where they have seen recreational impacts. What do they think of that? What should our response be?*

## Teaching the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace (1 hour 30 minutes)

**Resource:** BSA, *Teaching Leave No Trace*, No. 11-117  
BSA, *BSA Leave No Trace Trainer Course Manual*  
BSA, *Boy Scout Handbook*, centennial edition, Chapter 7

**Additional Resource:**

Leave No Trace Center, *101 Ways to Teach Leave No Trace*

**Course Requirements:**

Each Principle should be allotted 10 to 15 minutes. The principles can be discussed in any order. Try to mix teaching styles to accommodate different learning styles. At least two of the principles must be taught using an *experiential* technique. An experiential technique means that the instructor will guide the participants through actually completing a Leave No Trace related activity. A good example, and one which is recommended, is teaching how to properly site, dig, and cover a cathole.

The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace (all must be addressed)

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly (Pack It In, Pack It Out)
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Suggested lesson plans for each principle may be found in *Teaching Leave No Trace* and in *BSA Leave No Trace Trainer Course Manual*.

*Teaching the seven Principles can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The Trainer (or Master Educator) should be encouraged to be creative in the delivery of these topics. A round robin format could be used for large groups and discussion groups could be used for smaller sized groups. Remember: hands-on (or “experiential”) activities help people learn and retain more than just lecture!*

### ***Background on the Principles of Leave No Trace***

*Often, before people can decide to minimize impacts—to “leave no trace”—they must feel a personal connection to the land; they need a reason to care. Caring can take many forms: a love of beauty, an enjoyment of wild plants and animals, an interest in learning about the natural world, a feeling of oneness with nature, a desire for fun and leisure, the excitement of discovery, or even a need to be challenged. All these examples help illustrate how we are a part of the web of life that surrounds us.*

*An understanding of how the natural world functions—and our ability to change this world—raises many considerations about Leave No Trace. Before teaching Leave No Trace, leaders are encouraged to help people make a personal connection with the natural world. Simultaneously, as the individual nurtures this connection, a commitment to protecting the natural world also takes shape. This section helps set the stage for promoting Leave No Trace and reminds us that humans are part of the natural world.*

*Before teaching this course, it is essential to feel comfortable and knowledgeable. The instructor should be thoroughly familiar with the principles before proceeding with the activities. After becoming comfortable with the principles in general, then, review the appropriate information for each principle before conducting the specific activity related to the principle.*

**<BREAK> (15 minutes)**

### **Two hands on sessions (15 minutes each – 30 minutes total)**

The instructor must choose two activities from the BSA *Teaching Leave No Trace* manual or the Center’s *101 Ways to Teach Leave No Trace* and ensure that all of the participants have an opportunity to participate in each activity. One of these sessions must address human waste disposal. *These are the “experiential” elements mentioned above in the Course Requirements section.*

### **BSA Advancement/Achievement Awards (10 minutes)**

*Presenter will review the advancement requirements for the program areas within Scouting and the Awareness awards. Focus on the awards most relevant to the group you are working with.*

### **Next Steps: Additional Training**

*The presenter should present information about how to learn more about the principles of Leave No Trace for those interested in deeper knowledge. The presenter could mention, for example, both a Leave No Trace Trainer course – a minimum 16 hour overnight course – or a Leave No Trace Master Educator course – typically a 5 days / 5 nights course. Any Scout 14 years of age or older is eligible to take a Trainer course; any Scouter 18 years of age or older is eligible to take a Master Educator course.*

### **Wrap up Question and Answer and Present Awareness Cards (5 minutes)**

At the conclusion of the course, the presenter should present each attendee who participated in a meaningful way with the BSA “Leave No Trace Awareness Card”, No. 21-116. These cards are available from National Supply. The cards may be ordered through your local Scout Service Center or by contacting your council’s Outdoor Ethics Advocate (if one has been appointed) or by contacting your Scout Executive or designee.

### **Course Reporting**

Trainers completing a BSA Leave No Trace 101 course should keep a list of the date of training, the number of individuals trained, their unit numbers, and the number of Leave No Trace Awareness cards issued. This information should be provided to the Council Outdoor Ethics Advocate and the Training Committee or other individual charged with updating individual training records in Scoutnet at least annually or upon request. The data code for Leave No Trace awareness training is D74.

### **Alternative to the BSA Leave No Trace 101 Course**

A Leave No Trace Trainer is not obligated to conduct the entire BSA Leave No Trace 101 course in a single three-hour session. Instead, the training may be split over a number of meetings or outings **within a reasonable period (30 days or less)**, provided that the participants obtain at least 15 minutes of Trainer supervised instruction on each principle and that two of the principles have a “hands-on” or “experiential” teaching element. One of the hands-on elements must be dispose of waste properly and is recommended to be how to site, dig, and cover a cathole properly.

An example would be to teach the Introduction, the History of Leave No Trace, and the introduction to the Seven Principles at a unit meeting or two and then teach the hands-on activities during the unit outing later the same or next month. This helps the participants reflect upon the message and then reinforce the message by practicing the principles. Of course, remind the participants that Leave No Trace should be practiced on all outings, not just the outing where it is the planned program!

The BSA Leave No Trace 101 course could also be taught at two consecutive roundtables, at a University of Scouting, as part of a summer camp “alternative program” for Scouts and Scouters not involved in merit badge activities, or even a conservation or Leave No Trace themed camporee.