

Troop Outdoor Ethics Guide Handbook



Outdoor Ethics Guide Training

The position of Outdoor Ethics Guide is unique among the leadership positions available to Scouts BSA. Relying on specific skills not specifically taught to scouts as one guiding principal it is imperative that the prospective OEG educates him/herself prior to assuming the position.

Prospective OEG's should have a passion for conservation and a strong desire to share their love of the outdoors with their peers. The scout should be an advocate for conservation in the wider world.

The Scouts BSA offers a variety of training materials; some in the form of books and readings, other in the form of online courses.

<https://outdoorethics-bsa.org/resources/>

It is required that a scout undertaking the position of OEG should have completed some basic training before he begins the role.

Required Minimum Training:

National Park Service Leave No Trace Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jX01uY0MvmQ>

Leave No Trace:

<https://lnt.org/get-involved/training-courses/online-awareness-course/>

Tread Lightly:

<https://treadlightly.org/learn/online-courses/>

Outdoor Ethics Guide Duties

As the troop outdoor ethics guide, your primary duty is to help your unit members take steps to reduce impacts of their outdoor activities. To start, meet with your troop outdoor ethics advisor or another designated person, and identify the actions you will complete during your term. Fill out the Outdoor Ethics Guide Goals and Evaluation form with your advisor. (See *Appendix A*.)

1. Explain and Demonstrate Advancement Requirements

OUTDOOR ETHICS RELATED RANK REQUIREMENTS:



TENDERFOOT 1C. Tell how you practiced the Outdoor Code on a campout or outing.



SECOND CLASS 1B. Explain the principles of Leave No Trace and tell how you practiced them on a different from the one used for Tenderfoot requirement 1c.



FIRST CLASS 1B. Explain each of the principles of Tread Lightly! and tell how you practiced them on a different from the ones used for Tenderfoot requirement 1c and Second Class requirement 1b.

OUTDOOR ETHICS GUIDE ACTIONS

Explain Principles

- o Meet with Scouts within 30 days of rank advancement and ask them to read the appropriate pages of Chapter 7 in their *Scouts BSA Handbook*.
- o Help them make a plan for learning their outdoor ethics skills.
- o At a meeting or outing, have them explain each of the principles to you or another person.

Demonstrate Principles

- o Before a campout or outing, make a plan for working with Scouts and discuss it with them.

- o Go through the steps of planning a patrol activity and identify situations that are addressed in the principles of Leave No Trace or Tread Lightly!.
- o Practice teaching these using the EDGE method.
- o Make sure you bring any supplies or equipment you need to teach these skills.
- o Set up stations or scenarios for Scouts to demonstrate their new skills to you.

Idea: Use your unit duty roster or a similar tool to help others understand how principles relate to duties.

(See the Outing Duty Roster and the Teaching EDGE Method in Appendix A. See the Outdoor Code, Principles of Leave No Trace, and Tread Lightly! Principles in Appendix B.)

After the campout or outing, ask Scouts to tell you or a designated person what they did to demonstrate the principles. As arranged with your Scoutmaster or senior patrol leader, sign the Scout advancement requirement when earned.

2. Help Your Unit Plan and Conduct an Effective Outdoor Ethics Program

Your goal is to help your unit practice outdoor ethics in all of its outdoor events and outings, not just sometimes.

To get started, share with others in your unit what outdoor ethics means to you. Discuss the impact Scouting activities have on the environment and other people. Once your unit members see how important outdoor ethics is to you, they are more likely to become engaged. Review how implementing outdoor ethics principles can improve campsites. Explain how practicing the principles of Leave No Trace can result in less gear and lighter packs for your fellow Scouts and reduce impacts while your unit enjoys the outdoors.

OUTDOOR ETHICS GUIDE ACTIONS

Develop your unit outdoor ethics plan.

Below are suggestions for how to do this.

- o Discuss developing an outdoor ethics plan with your Scoutmaster and senior patrol leader.

- o At a patrol leaders' council meeting, assess how well your unit is using the principles of Leave No Trace. (*See the Troop Assessment Form in Appendix A.*)

- o Get patrol leaders' input on the results of the assessment to help develop your outdoor ethics plan.

Use your annual activity plan to identify opportunities to practice outdoor ethics. Ask patrol leaders to find out who is aware of how to practice outdoor ethics and include them in presenting outdoor ethics to others. Lead activities, games, and challenges to help your unit learn to practice outdoor ethics.

Once members understand how to practice outdoor ethics, develop a plan with patrol leaders or the senior patrol leader to recognize and reduce impacts of your upcoming activity. You may want to use the Planning an Outing form. (*See Appendix A.*) Assist the patrol leaders or senior patrol leader in implementing the plan with the patrol or troop members. Attend at least two campouts or outings and observe how well the principles were followed.

After the event is completed, review the principles followed during the event. Take time to reflect on which were followed, which your unit could do better at, and which were not followed or were skipped. Come up with ideas to help the unit better follow outdoor ethics principles next time.

OUTDOOR ETHICS GUIDE ACTIONS

Carry out the plan.

Your unit is likely active in many different settings. Every outing offers opportunities to reduce outdoor impacts. It is important that planning each activity includes how to reduce outdoor impacts.

Front country settings such as state parks and Scout camps are most frequently used. Ensuring the area is as good as or better than you found it is a way to be considerate of others. Your group may share an area with others, so planning needs to address this. The

size of your group, the activities you plan to do, and the time of day for doing them all can impact others. Parks now often have recycling programs. Others have reduced or eliminated garbage services. Be sure your unit is prepared to reduce what you bring, use recycling or disposal sites, or carry out your trash.

When in a front country setting, be sure to:

- o Be considerate of others.
- o Manage your waste by reducing what you bring.

Build a fire only in a campfire ring, put out your fire, and clean out the fire ring when cold.

Urban areas may have limited green spaces or park areas and often have dense populations. Your activities may involve mass transit and use of technology.

When in a primarily urban setting, your role is to:

- o Help others consider how to minimize or avoid impacts on even the smallest spaces.
- o Discuss with your group how one can follow outdoor ethics concepts in this setting.

Consider ways to reduce impacts on others where many people congregate as well as areas where one might go to enjoy the quiet.

Backcountry camping, where you are more than a day from your car, requires your unit to be diligent in applying outdoor ethics. Your group is likely to have immediate impact on local animals, plants, bodies of water, and other backpackers. Planning and preparation are the keys to reducing outdoor impacts.

- o Make sure participants are prepared by helping them learn the skills they will need before you go.
- o Help ensure that Scout experience and skills match the challenges of the trek.

Be sure to refer to your Scouts BSA Handbook or a trained adult leader on best practices to follow for the type of trek or adventure the unit is planning.

After the campout or outing, review the principles followed during the event. Take time to reflect on which were followed, which you could do better at, and which were not followed or were skipped. Come up with ideas to help the unit better follow outdoor ethics principles next time. (See *the Leave No Trace Teaching Activities in Appendix C.*)

3. Prepare Den Chiefs to Share Principles

The 2015 Cub Scout rank advancement includes requirements for Scouts at each rank to repeat and/or explain the Outdoor Code and Leave No Trace Principles for Kids. Leave No Trace Principles for Kids is a version of Leave No Trace that is more easily understood by Cub Scout-age boys and girls. Cub Scouts follow these at outings and campouts. In addition, each rank focuses on one or more of the individual principles. (See *the Outdoor Code and the Leave No Trace Principles for Kids in Appendix B.*)

OUTDOOR ETHICS GUIDE ACTIONS

- o Explain to den chiefs that outdoor activity leaves impacts.
- o Identify appropriate activities and games about these impacts.
- o Be sure you can explain the activities and games, keep directions short, and make it fun!
- o Share appropriate activities and games about outdoor ethics with the den chief.

Be available to assist the den chief.

Cub Scout Outdoor Ethics Rank Focuses

Tiger: Trash Your Trash

Wolf: Be Careful With Fire/Respect Wildlife

Bear: Leave What You Find/Be Kind to Other Visitors

Webelos and Arrow of Light: All

Learning the more advanced tactics of the Leave No Trace principles begins when Arrow of Light dens transition into Scouts BSA. As the outdoor ethics guide, you will introduce them to these and explain how to practice them in more detail.

Note: Two of the Leave No Trace Principles for Kids are not specifically addressed in the Cub Scout handbooks: Know Before You Go and Choose the Right Path. Also, only the *Webelos Den Leader Guide* explains the principles.

4. Help Scouts to Understand and Plan Conservation Activities

Conservation is one of the foundations of the Scouting program. This means taking care of the outdoors so animals, plants, and people all have healthy habitats in which to live.

To emphasize its importance, conservation-related service hours were added to Life Scout advancement requirements in the 13th edition of the *Scouts BSA Handbook*. Completing conservation service was also added to the Cub Scout, Scout, and Venturer and Sea Scout World Conservation Awards.

OUTDOOR ETHICS GUIDE ACTIONS

- o Ask your unit to obtain a copy of the Conservation Handbook for your library.
- o Become familiar with what conservation is and the types of projects that are appropriate.
- o See the Conservation Project Planning Checklist in Appendix A for information on how to plan a conservation project.
- o Discuss conservation with Scouts working toward their Life rank or refer them to someone familiar with conservation.

Encourage your unit to conduct a conservation project or participate in one with other units.

5. Encourage Scouts to Complete Outdoor Ethics Awards and Merit Badges

The BSA Outdoor Ethics program includes recognition for completing training and practicing the Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! principles. These include the Outdoor

Ethics Awareness and Outdoor Ethics Action awards. Both are available for Scouts and Venturers, as well as their adult leaders.

The Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award recognizes those who go beyond the basic Scouting requirements of learning the principles. This includes taking online courses and training. The Outdoor Ethics Action Award is a more rigorous award involving teaching, holding a position of responsibility, participating in outings, and presenting information. *(See Awards in Appendix C.)*

OUTDOOR ETHICS GUIDE ACTIONS

- o Introduce Scouts to the Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action awards.

- o Tell Scouts where to find the requirements and the URLs for the online courses.

- o Encourage Scouts to review sections of the *Scouts BSA Handbook* on cooking, hiking, and camping.

Be available to address questions on meeting outdoor ethics requirements for merit badges.

6. Complete Self-Evaluation

As arranged with your Scoutmaster, outdoor ethics guide advisor, or senior patrol leader, complete your self-evaluation and discuss it with them. Obtain sign-off for completing the portions of the leadership assignment you agreed to. Discuss the results at your Scoutmaster conference or follow your unit process for documenting completion of a leadership position of responsibility. *(See the Outdoor Ethics Guide Goals and Evaluation form in Appendix A.)*