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# CONSERVATION

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## Wilderness Use Policy of the Boy Scouts of America

All privately or publicly owned backcountry land and designated wildernesses are included in the term “wilderness areas” in this policy. The Outdoor Code of the Boy Scouts of America and the principles of Leave No Trace apply to outdoor behavior generally, but for treks into wilderness areas, minimum-impact camping methods must be used. Within the outdoor program of the Boy Scouts of America, there are many different camping-skill levels. Camping practices that are appropriate for day outings, long-term Scout camp, or short-term unit camping might not apply to wilderness areas. Wherever they go, Scouts need to adopt attitudes and patterns of behavior that respect the rights of others, including future generations, to enjoy the outdoors.

In wilderness areas, it is crucial to minimize human impact, particularly on fragile ecosystems such as mountains, lakes and streams, deserts, and seashores. Because our impact varies from one season of the year to the next, it becomes important for us to adjust to these changing conditions to avoid damaging the environment.

The Boy Scouts of America emphasizes these practices for all troops, teams, and crews planning to use wilderness areas:

- ♣ Contact the landowner or land-managing agency (USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, state and private agencies, etc.) well before an outing to learn the regulations for that area, including group size limits, to obtain required permits and current maps, and to discuss ways Scouts can fulfill the expectations of property owners or land managers.
  - ♣ Obtain a tour permit (available through local council service centers), meet all of its conditions, and carry it during the trip.
  - ♣ Review the appropriate BSA safety literature relating to planned activities. (See Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, Climb On Safely, and Trek Safely.) Also see the *Guide to Safe Scouting* on the BSA Web site at <http://www.scouting.org/pubs/gss/toc.html> for more information on current BSA policies and procedures for ensuring safe activities, as well as the *Fieldbook* Web site at <http://www.bsafieldbook.org>.
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- ♣ Match the ruggedness of high-adventure experiences to the skills, physical ability, and maturity of those taking part. Save rugged treks for older unit members who are more proficient and experienced in outdoor skills.
  - ♣ Conduct pretrip training for your group that stresses proper wilderness behavior, rules, and skills for all of the conditions that may be encountered, including lightning, missing person, wildfire, high winds, flooding, and emergency medical situations.
  - ♣ Participate in training in how to apply the principles of Leave No Trace, and be proficient and experienced in the leadership and skills required for treks into wilderness areas.
  - ♣ Adhere to the principles of Leave No Trace.



## Outdoor Code

*As an American, I will do my best to—*

*Be clean in my outdoor manners.* I will treat the outdoors as a heritage. I will take care of it for myself and others. I will keep my trash and garbage out of lakes, streams, fields, woods, and roadways.

*Be careful with fire.* I will prevent wildfire. I will build my fires only when and where they are appropriate. When I have finished using a fire, I will make sure it is cold out. I will leave a clean fire ring, or remove all evidence of my fire.

*Be considerate in the outdoors.* I will treat public and private property with respect. I will follow the principles of Leave No Trace for all outdoor activities.

*Be conservation-minded.* I will learn about and practice good conservation of soil, waters, forests, minerals, grasslands, wildlife, and energy. I will urge others to do the same.

