

Outing in Scouting, is a call for Outdoor Ethics

We have all heard the expression “Outing in Scouting.” Outdoor programs are a big part of what brings youth to the Scouting program. Scouts of all ages, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Venturing Crews, know the value of outdoor programs. However, we don’t always know the impact we have on the outdoors when we camp, explore and experience the outdoors.

With over 2.4 Million Scouts in the United States and BSA being one of the largest youth organizations in the United States, we have an enormous impact on the nature around us. The outdoors can include both Frontcountry (city parks and metro parks) and Backcountry (state and federal lands), and includes the locations where we camp and hike.

The BSA Outdoor Ethics program includes four parts: The Outdoor Code, Leave No Trace, Tread Lightly and Land Ethics. BSA has now introduced Outdoor Ethics advancement requirements with all Scout ranks and all new training programs. Additionally, there was a recent change to include a new Boy Scout youth leadership position called the Outdoor Ethics Guide. If your Troop does not have a Scout in this position, please consider discussing it at the next SPL meeting. There is a new publication called “The Outdoor Ethics Guide Handbook” which can be found online at:

<http://www.scouting.org/filestore/outdoorethicsguide/pdf/OutdoorEthicsGuide2017.pdf>

In the past year, Simon Kenton Council offered two Leave No Trace Trainer courses. We would like to continue to expand the number of courses being offered in 2018. Additionally, we are looking at offer Outdoor Ethics orientations (3 hour training course) starting in the fall of 2018 for all interested Scouts, Outdoor Ethics Guides and adult leaders.

In 2017 SKC established a new position called the Outdoor Ethics (OE) Advocate. The OE Advocate is a volunteer position that coordinates the local council’s Leave No Trace training and similar outdoor ethics programs for BSA youth and adult members. This training is meant to enrich the Scouting experience for the members, help reduce our impact on the land consistent with Scouting’s historic message, and help ensure continuing access to public lands for Scouting purposes.

My goal in the coming year is to expand out training opportunities, with both new courses and to become a vital part of current youth (JLT and NYLT) and adult leader training courses. If you have completed the Leave No Trace Trainer (or Master Educator) course, I would like to hear from you. We know there are many adult leaders who have completed the Leave No Trace Trainer course with BSA in other councils or with other training providers. We want to know who you are.

There will be an Outdoor Ethics table at the University of Scouting and we plan to offer several classes with the College of Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. How to see you there.

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