

Service-Learning for Outdoor Recreation and Stewardship

This activity engages middle school students in a service-learning project that focuses on outdoor ethics to promote responsible recreation on public lands. Middle school students first develop a thorough understanding of the seven Leave No Trace (LNT) principles. They then host or travel to fourth grade classes to explain how to enjoy recreating on public lands while exercising stewardship. In addition, the middle school students explain how the fourth graders can claim Every Kid in a Park passes, which are available only to fourth graders.

This activity addresses the following essential understanding:

- The outdoor recreation opportunities we enjoy on public lands today will be there in the future only if people understand and follow the seven LNT principles.

Overview

This activity introduces students to:

- The seven LNT principles.
- The consequences of recreational activity that does not follow the LNT principles.
- The Every Kid in a Park program, which allows fourth graders and their families free admission to federal fee-area lands and waters.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to (1) identify the seven LNT principles, and (2) explain to peers and younger students why following the LNT principles is important.



Time Estimate: 90 minutes of preparation plus time to carry out a presentation to fourth graders

Teacher Preparation

1. Identify one or more fourth grade classes where your students can make presentations about LNT principles and their importance.
2. Arrange for the ability to show a Youtube video to your class.
3. Ensure your students have access to the LNT website (<https://lnt.org/learn/7-principles>), or print the detailed description of each of the seven LNT principles from that website.
4. Refer to the Department of the Interior's service-learning toolkit as needed (http://www.icicp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/DOI-Service-Learning-Toolkit_updated_Spring2014_FINAL.pdf).

Procedure

1. For a 1-2 minute introductory brainstorm, ask students to describe what a person does when she or he is practicing "outdoor ethics." Record responses and save their ideas for use during the reflection essay.
2. Introduce public lands and responsible recreation on BLM-managed lands by showing the video from Youtube that describes BLM recreation opportunities, found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbT6QZHf_sc&feature=youtu.be
3. Let students know they will explore seven principles of outdoor ethics known as the Leave No Trace principles. Small groups will become experts in one of the principles, develop a presentation about the principle for fourth grade students, teach that principle to middle school classmates, and present the principle to fourth graders.
4. Divide the class into seven groups of roughly equal size. Assign each group a different LNT principle, and provide a computer with Internet access or distribute a detailed description of an LNT principle to each group (principle 1 for group 1, principle 2 for group 2, and so forth).
5. Ask each group to discuss what its principle means, why it is important, and what would happen if people ignored the principle when they go to public lands for outdoor recreation. Have them plan a 5-minute presentation designed for fourth graders that focuses what happens to public lands when people do not follow their group's LNT principle.

6. Have each group practice its presentation in front of the rest of the class. After each presentation, invite students to ask for clarifications and recommend improvements. After all the presentations are completed, encourage groups to adjust their presentations as needed.
7. Arrange for students to make their presentations to one or more fourth grade classes. There will be seven presentations, one for each LNT principle. Conclude by explaining to the fourth graders that they can receive a fourth grade pass to all fee area federal lands and waters, through the Every Kid in a Park website (<https://www.everykidinapark.gov/>).

Assessment

Assign an essay in which students reflect on their presentations and the LNT principles, addressing questions such as

- Who are the LNT principles designed for, and why?
- What behaviors would you now add to the list of outdoor ethics activities you described at the beginning of the activity (refer to the brainstorming list from step 1)?
- What are the three most important consequences of not following the LNT principles?
- How effective was the presentation of your LNT principle to fourth graders?
- What one thing would you change about your presentation if you could do it again?