



2015 Hot Spot Report

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Thank you REI for sustaining support of the Hot Spot program



Leave No Trace Hot Spot Program

The 2015 Hot Spot Program raised awareness about 12 parks and protected areas across the country that are facing the threat of irreversible environmental damage. Each of 12 Hot Spots face damage from various recreational impacts including excess litter, campsite and trail widening, the defacing of trees and plants and improper disposal of human waste. The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics partnered with various community leaders, public land managers and organizations to host weeklong series of trainings, outreach events, and service projects to help raise awareness and put Leave No Trace principles into action into these communities.

The programs served as a significant call to action in each community by bringing to light the severe impacts these parks are facing. Leave No Trace trainings helped teach park staff and key volunteers how to effectively communicate Leave No Trace in ways that would hopefully curb the negative behaviors of the visiting public. Trainings and action-related events such as trash-cleanups educated the public about the importance of practicing Leave No Trace and helped reduce some the impacts that had already occurred. Hot Spots also generated local and regional media about the importance of practicing Leave No Trace. The media highlighting Hot Spots was critical in building momentum for trainings, events, service projects and active engagement from local outdoor enthusiasts.

2015 Hot Spot Selections

The Hot Spot program was created to highlight and aid areas across the United States that are facing the consequence of irreversible environmental damage due to human recreation. Hot Spots are various parks and protected areas that are damaged, but can recover and become healthy again after specific Leave No Trace applications. Everyday, people seek the outdoors for adventure, exercise, and/or solitude. Hot Spots across the country where people visit, recreate and enjoy are being severely impacted by public use. From excess litter, damage to campsites and trails, feeding wildlife and more, these locations need the help of Leave No Trace to recover and become healthy again.

In late 2014, the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics received 83 nominations from public land managers, agency representatives, local community members, and friends groups. Center staff selected 12 sites based on the types of recreational impacts occurring, the severity of these impacts, and their proximity to urban areas. Additionally, the Center tried to select parks from a variety of management agencies,

from small scale state parks to large national parks. In February of 2015 the Center announced the selection of 12 geographically and ecologically diverse sites from regions throughout the U.S.

2015 Hot Spots:

February 2nd-9th: **Saguaro National Park, AZ**
March 23rd-30th: **Travis County Parks, TX**
April 6th-13th: **Point Reyes National Seashore, CA**
June 1-8th: **Tillamook State Forest, OR**
July 13th-20th: **Mount Bierstadt, CO**
August 10-17th: **Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area, MI**
August 24th-30th: **Linville Gorge Wilderness Area, NC**
August 31st-September 7th: **Mount St Helens National Park, WA**
September 23rd-30th: **McAfee Knob, Appalachian Trail, VA**
October 5th-12th: **Ventana Wilderness, CA**
October 5th-12th: **Pinnacle Mountain State Park, AR**
October 26th -November 2nd: **Bayou Teche Paddle Trail, LA**

2015 Hot Spot Stories

Saguaro National Park, AZ

“They’re essentially parks or places that are being loved to death, and so Saguaro is experiencing a lot of visitors and a lot of impacts,” according to Courtney Bierschbach, one of the Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers. “We’re here to work with the community to try to take care of some of those impacts.” – Arizona Public Media

PROBLEM

Saguaro National Park is an “urban” national park located on the outskirts of Tucson, Arizona. This park is visited by over 670,000 visitors a year and is a popular place for hiking, cycling and picnicking. The site was selected because of several major detrimental impacts occurring including the invasive buffleggrass plant species,



undesigned trail use, and litter. Buffleglass is an invasive plant that is native to Africa and Asia. It out competes native plants, pushing them out and promoting wildfires in the areas it dominates. In Southern Arizona, patches have doubled every two to seven years since 1988.

SOLUTION

During this Hot Spot week the Leave No Trace put on 11 distinct programs. From presentations and workshops at a local REI, for park law enforcement volunteers, the University of Arizona Outdoor Adventure Center, and local girl scouts. They also worked with buffleglass technicians to assist in their monitoring efforts of this invasive plant species. During the various events throughout the week Leave No Trace trained 169 key stakeholders.

The Leave No Trace field trainings offered to the Arizona Conservations Corps and park staff combined with the informal visitor contacts have the potential to make an enormous difference in reducing future impact on the park. The training focused on Leave No Trace education and effective methods for distributing this information to over 700,000 annual visitors and local community members. The agency staff at Saguaro National Park has future plans to work with the Center to create and implement Leave No Trace educational signage surrounding their efforts against the spread of the highly invasive buffelgrass.

Travis County Parks, TX

“We are excited to work with the Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers to help educate our community and raise awareness for the future enjoyment and preservation of our beautiful landscape,” - Austin360

PROBLEM

The scenic and popular Travis County Parks were nominated as a 2015 Hot Spot because of the various visitor created impacts this park system is experiencing. The Travis County Park system is



composed of 27 parks located in and around Austin, Texas. There numerous types of recreation that take in these parks and the types of recreation vary depending on the type and location of the park. Similarly, the types of impact occurring also varies from park to park. The impacts range from social impacts such as crowding and conflicts

between user groups to ecological impacts including disposal of waste in rivers or the defacing of trees and plants. There are hundreds of thousands of people who visit the Travis County Parks system every year.

SOLUTION

Leave No Trace personnel held 7 programs throughout the week. Leave No Trace provided private agency trainings for the park staff, a 30-minute Awareness Workshop for the Texas Youth Conservation Corps, two REI presentations for REI staff and members of the Sierra Club and held booth outreach at the Hamilton Pool trailhead. The trainers additionally participated in a trail project in, which they camouflaged 15 user created trails. During the week they also held two trash cleanups of high use climbing areas. The Hot Spot events had an outstanding turnout with numerous enthusiastic participants. All in all, Leave No Trace was able to train close to 400 attendees.

During the staff agency training it was revealed that of the 60 participating staff members, the majority had never heard of Leave No Trace. After this training the park staff were able to see the benefits of practicing Leave No Trace ethics and the impacts teaching Leave No Trace to their visitors could have on the 27 parks throughout the system. The implementation of this knowledge and training has the potential to greatly reduce both the social and biological impacts in the parks.

Point Reyes National Seashore, CA

PROBLEM

Point Reyes National Seashore is located about 30 miles from San Francisco and has about 2.5 million visitors a year. It extends over 80,000 acres, 30,000 of which is federally designated Wilderness. The park has approximately 150 miles of trails and abundant opportunities for recreational activities such as various water sports, hiking, and overnight camping. The Seashore is also home to diverse wildlife on both land and sea. The impacts from recreational activities at Point Reyes are improper disposal of human waste, litter, damage from campfires and visitors approaching wildlife.



SOLUTION

During the Hot Spot week, Leave No Trace personnel conducted five trainings and presentations. The participants in these trainings included staff from the National seashore, local guiding companies and non-profits. Leave No Trace also presented to

local school groups who visit the park. The Leave No Trace staff educated 470 people during the seven-day event. They also participated in a trash clean-up of one mile of shoreline and two park trails. The staff and forty volunteers were able to collect 1000 lbs of trash, which included large amounts of scrap wood, automobile parts and plastic toys.

During the week five trainings were conducted for key personnel including: park staff, volunteers, local guiding groups and community members who serve as a point of contact for the park's visitors. The trainings taught these personnel how to best deliver more pointed Leave No Trace information for the public. Additionally, the trail and beach clean up was very effective not only in removing trash and debris, but also served as a way to bring the community together.

Tillamook State Forest, OR

"The Tillamook State Forest is a popular destination for hikers, campers, and paddlers and a unique piece of Oregon history. It's so popular, in fact, that use during the busy summer months has outpaced the Oregon Department of Forestry's capacity for meeting this increased demand" – Tillamook Headlight Herald

PROBLEM

The Tillamook State Forest encompasses 364,000 acres of the Northwest corner of Oregon. Visitors travel to the park to enjoy its recreational opportunities for hiking, hunting, birding, camping and more. The area faces the threat of recreation-related impacts with the top three being improper disposal of human waste, live tree damage and user created or social trails. These issues, specifically human waste and the live tree damage, are behavioral issues that require a shift in mind set rather than those that are less avoidable.



SOLUTION

The Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers conducted seven workshops in the hopes of shifting the general populations towards a Leave No Trace ethic based mindset. The workshops included an agency training day, two evening campfire programs, and trainings for local trail volunteers. The service project was a river cleanup in which Leave No Trace personnel and 15 volunteers paddled 6 miles and collected two truck beds full of trash. The trash collected included items such as camping furniture, a kitchen sink, hundreds of feet of fishing line, various car parts and metal fencing. The

Hot Spot events drew a total of 1,213 participants to the various outreach and training events.

After participating in a specialized agency training, members of the volunteer trail patrol group were motivated to share Leave No Trace information with Forest users. The training taught these patrollers how to effectively communicate to visitors why certain practices are detrimental to the area. Having the trainers on-site as a resource was incredibly helpful for the staff. They were able to provide recommendations on how to mitigate the impacts that they were seeing first hand. In the future, the Tillamook State Forest staff hopes to work with the Center to develop educational signage encouraging user responsibility and to deter detrimental practices such as the chopping of live trees.

Mount Bierstadt, CO

“The scenic and popular Mt. Bierstadt has experienced visitor-created impacts to alpine vegetation, trail erosion, pet management and waste.” – Westword Magazine

PROBLEM

The Mt. Bierstadt Hot Spot is one of Colorado’s famous 14,000 ft. peaks. Bierstadt is one of the easiest 14,000 ft. peaks to climb hosting between 30,000 and 40,000 visitors a year. On summer weekends there are between 800-1000 hikers on the mountain a day. This high visitation rate has resulted in several severe impacts including: improper disposal of human waste, pet waste, litter, dogs off leash, use of undesignated trails, trail widening, and trampling of vegetation and alpine tundra.



SOLUTION

Over 500 people attended the Hot Spot events. Leave No Trace worked with the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative and the U.S. Forest Service to host seven events, three of which were trainings and four service projects. The trainings included a Leave No Trace Trainer Course and two specialized Leave No Trace Trainings, one for volunteers and the other for paid agency staff. Trainer Courses are the middle tier of Leave No Trace Trainings. The participants in the course learned minimum impact practices, the specialized management techniques and how to teach Leave No Trace to others in a formal workshop or training setting. The information gathered during this training can now effectively be passed from the course participants to the mountain’s 40,000 annual visitors.

Leave No Trace recommended that the U.S. Forest Service provide more accurate information and agency recommendations surrounding Leave No Trace practices to the public via their website, social media and visitor centers. The managers at Pike National Forest acted upon these recommendations and are in the process of developing a program similar to the one suggested by Leave No Trace staff.

Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area, MI

“The events are designed to raise awareness about local natural areas facing threats of irreversible environmental damage” – Travers City Record Eagle

PROBLEM

The Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area makes up 3,450 acres of Huron-Manistee National Forest in Michigan. The Wilderness Area alone sees 14,000 visitors with over 50,000 visiting the surrounding national forest every year. There are abundant recreational opportunities such as hiking, dog walking, mountain biking, and angling just to name a few. Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area was nominated to be a 2015 Hot Spot due to environmental impacts from use conflicts, the cutting of live trees for firewood and improper human waste disposal.



SOLUTION

Leave No Trace ran a variety of outreach events, including outreach at a popular trailhead, trainer course and a media day to make a contacts with the local media and spread the word about the issues at the Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area. There were over 200 attendees to the various Hot Spot events. This Hot Spot was one that that included a substantial amount of media outreach. This included a large social media push in which throughout the week the Huron-Manistee National Forest Facebook posted Leave No Trace information about the Hot Spot.

A two-day Trainer Course was run exclusively for U.S. Forest Service employees. As Leave No Trace Trainers these employees are now prepared to accurately convey Leave No Trace information to the 50,000 plus visitors to the national forest. Leave No Trace also put on two evening programs at the campground in the Lake Michigan Recreation

Area. Through these programs they were able to reach local recreationists and teach them the ethics and low impact practices necessary for responsible recreation.

Linville Gorge Wilderness Area, NC

“The United States’ federally designated Wilderness Areas are established to maintain certain forest areas across the country in a pristine, natural and undisturbed condition. But unfortunately, a lack of “leave no trace” practices by some Linville Gorge visitors is endangering this esteemed designation for this treasured destination.” – Watauga Democrat

PROBLEM

Linville Gorge Wilderness Area, located in the mountains of Western North Carolina, is part of the Pisgah National Forest. This Wilderness area offers many recreational opportunities including hiking, backpacking, rock climbing, fishing and hunting. The area was nominated due to avoidable visitor impacts including trash on the trail, social trails, improper disposal of human waste, campsite widening and rock scarring.



SOLUTION

With help from the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards and the Pisgah National Forest Rangers, Leave No Trace was able to conduct a variety of education programs; outreach programs and several service projects. The service projects included: invasive species removal, trail maintenance and trash cleanup. During the three projects Leave No Trace personnel and 44 other volunteers removed 500 invasive trees, created drainages and water bars on a half-mile portion of trail, and removed 12 bags of trash, some of which dated back to before the Wilderness Act. There was a total of 87 people involved in the events throughout the Hot Spot week,

During the week Leave No Trace held a workshop for the North Carolina Outward Bound School instructors who frequently visit and instruct in the Linville Gorge. These instructors can spread their new Leave No Trace knowledge and skills not only to their students, but with other recreationists.

Mount St. Helens National Park, OR

“The scenic and popular Mount St. Helens National Monument has experienced visitor-created impacts in recent years including excessive trash, damage to vegetation and trees and trail erosion.” – The Reflector

PROBLEM

The Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument is located in Washington State about 70 miles outside of Portland Oregon. The monument is located in Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Over 1.1 million people visit this forest annually. The 15,000-acre monument is home to 21 different types of recreation including mountain climbing, hunting, fishing and more. It was selected to be one of the 2015



Hot Spots because of large impacts including the improper disposal of human waste and trash. The park is highly under staffed, with only 1 employee for every 75,000 visitors, making visitor impacts hard to regulate.

SOLUTION

The Leave No Trace conducted seven different trainings and workshops over the course of the week including a campsite-monitoring event, trailhead outreach at Ape Cave and a trash cleanup. Leave No Trace was able to train 460 people throughout the week. During the trash cleanup Leave No Trace staff and 19 volunteers were able to collect 5,000 lbs. of trash that included a machete, glass kitchen tile, other household items and a bowling ball. During this Hot Spot Leave No Trace executed a social media take over with the Gifford Pinchot National Forest's Facebook that included one post every day for the entire Hot Spot week in hopes of raising awareness and attracting people to the Hot Spot events.

The trainings and outreach sessions were all successful in bringing Leave No Trace education to staff as well as visitors to the Monument. The attendees are now equipped to help spread Leave No Trace education to the recreating public. Several fieldwork sessions, including site monitoring projects and campsite cleanups, enabled the Land Managers and volunteers to bring the severity of the Monument's situation into focus.

McAfee Knob, Appalachian Trail, VA

“Commonly cited as the “Most Photographed Place on the Appalachian Trail” visitors come from around the country and the globe for the 8-mile round-trip hike to take in the iconic of the Catawba Valley. In recent years, ATC ridgerunners have documented a 55 percent increase per year in visitation, especially on busy spring and fall weekends” – The Roanoke Times

PROBLEM

The four-mile section of the Appalachian Trail leading up to McAfee Knob is facing the harm of detrimental impacts including campsite creation, campsite widening, trail widening, litter, human waste issues and crowding. McAfee Knob located outside of Roanoke, Virginia, sees an average of 1000 visitors a weekend during the busy season with an estimated annual visitation of about 20,000 to the knob alone.



The Knob is known as the most photographed location on the Appalachian Trail.

SOLUTION

Leave No Trace held 20 Awareness workshops in 6 days. They also participated in a trail maintenance project, a campsite revival project and a water bar construction project. The week's events also included school visits and trainings for members of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club members, local US Forest Service employees, and 12 students from a Roanoke College introduction to backpacking class. There was a total of 349 people trained during the Hot Spot week events.

One of the most important aspects of this week's trainings and outreach events was that the Leave No Trace staff was able to reach a wide variety of people from college students to elementary students, agency employees to local volunteers. Because of the large scope of people involved in trainings and outreach, the Hot Spot events were able to reach current users, potential future users and those who work to protect the McAfee Knob and its surrounding areas. Many of the students involved in the school visits had never heard of Leave No Trace, but are now equipped to share their newfound knowledge of Leave No Trace knowledge with their families and friends. Agency employees and the members of the RATC now have the ability to reach people recreating at McAfee Knob and the surrounding areas.

Ventana Wilderness, CA

“Sykes Camp, a small campground in Big Sur often saturated with backpackers because of it’s Hot Springs is being loved to death” – Santa Cruz Sentinel

PROBLEM

The Ventana Wilderness, located in Big Sur California, was nominated to be a 2015 Hot Spot with a focus on the Pine Ridge Trail that leads to the famous Sykes Hot Springs. The hot springs are located at the end of a very strenuous 10-mile hike.

Hundreds of visitors a week visit the natural springs causing large amounts of impact. The impacts include improper disposal of human waste and toilet paper,



campfires during firebans, creation of new, overly large campfire rings and lack of preparedness by a large number of visitors. Many visitors attempt the hike in plastic flip-flops, with little water and heavy gear. The large majority of hikers underestimate the steep elevation profile in this area.

SOLUTION

During the Hot Spot week, the Leave No Trace personnel hiked to and camped at the hot springs, put on a public Leave No Trace workshop at the REI in Marina, CA, gave a specialized, agency training to staff at Big Sur Station, and conducted trailhead outreach on the busy Columbus Day weekend. In the weeks before the Leave No Trace’s visit the Ventana Wilderness Rangers had gathered a large pile of trash that they were slowly attempting to pack out of the area. During the hike out of Sykes Camp and hot springs the Leave No Trace staff ended up assisting the rangers in packing out roughly 150 lbs of the trash pile. Though the public was not involved in this unexpected service project, the efforts of the staff and their local guides were successful in reducing the trash pile to less than 100 lbs. Over the week Leave No Trace was able to educate 375 hikers. Of these interactions, 269 of them took place during 2 sessions of trailhead outreach.

The general awareness workshop at the REI in Marina, CA had excellent attendance with 30 people participating in the training. The REI in Marina is one of the closest major outfitters to the Ventana Wilderness area. This training enabled the Leave No Trace staff to bring the issues at Sykes camp to the attention of the REI Staff and encourage them to share Leave No Trace with customers as a way of helping prevent some of the negative impacts. Leave No Trace also held a specialized agency training for 30

participants including members of the Ventana Wilderness Rangers, state park hosts and local travel guides. These participants regularly have the opportunity to communicate with visitors in the area. This valuable education will now allow them to communicate Leave No Trace effectively in the field.

The members of the Ventana Wilderness Alliance felt the trainings helped raise awareness of the issues at Sykes Hot Springs to the staff from the local management agencies. The planners hope that the Hot Spot events will help urge key wilderness volunteers continue their spreading Leave No Trace education and create a long term recurring relationship with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.

Pinnacle Mountain State Park, AR

PROBLEM

Pinnacle Mountain State Park in Little Rock Arkansas see 500,00 – 700,000 visitors every year. Its main attraction is the 1.5-mile loop that brings a large volume of visitors to the peak Pinnacle Mountain. This small area that sees a large visitation and therefore significant impacts. The Park was nominated for its large impacts from rogue trails, or trail's cutting straight up the mountain instead of following the thoughtfully engineered switchbacks of the main trail. Many visitors also come to the park unprepared and attempt to hike to the summit with a lack of water and proper footwear. This lack of preparedness has resulted in many issues for the park including 40 carry offs or rescues a year.



SOLUTION

Leave No Trace offered 20 distinct programs including outreach during service the service project day, a field day for 200 elementary school students and the assistance of the Leave No Trace Board of Directors and 17 workshops. During the Pick n' Plant service project day the volunteers able to disguise 7 main, rogue trails and 13 other trails and the Leave No Trace staff were able to educate 400 plus volunteers during booth and trail outreach.

The Leave No Trace recommended management strategies to the park managers that could help reduce future impacts. The recommendations included the addition of signage detailing why it is important to practice Leave No Trace. This paired with the specialized agency training will likely prove to be an invaluable tool in eliminating rogue trail use and helping the mountain heal. The use of this practice will raise visitor

awareness of rogue trails and increase the knowledge of why it is important to stay on the marked trail.

Bayou Teche Paddle Trail, LA

“Having Leave No Trace come in and instruct us and look at locations and try to anticipate where problems can arise – these are the tools we’re working with so we can have a healthy and safe paddle trail” – Daily World

PROBLEM

The Bayou Teche Paddle Trail is a 135-mile scenic water trail that passes through 4 parishes (or counties) in Louisiana. In January 2015 it received its designation as a National Water Trail. The trail’s main type of recreation is paddle sports. This national water trail was nominated due to severe impacts from excessive trash and invasive species. The TECHE project, a volunteer organization and the group whom nominated the paddle trail as a 2015 Hot Spot, has worked since 2009 to remove 50 tons of trash and invasive species.



SOLUTION

While on-site the Leave No Trace personnel was featured on a local Public Radio show, gave two presentations at the University of Louisiana Lafayette, held a two-day Trainer Course and took part in a clean-up of a small portion of the paddle trail. During the trash clean-up Leave No Trace and volunteers removed 1500 lbs of trash from the Bayou Teche. The trainers also educated over 100 people at a public event that proceeded the clean-up. All in all, Leave No Trace was able to educate 200 people during the week’s events.

As a result of the Hot Spot Week, the TECHE Project worked in partnership with Leave No Trace to create a “Keep It Clean” sign campaign. The “Keep It Clean” anti-litter signage project includes the installation of the new signs on bridges and various access points to the Bayou Teche. This project highlights the importance of the partnership between Leave No Trace and the TECHE Project and the positive effects the partnership will have on the paddle trail. The TECHE Project expects to keep installing these signs as well as feature a new Leave No Trace section on trail kiosks.

Overall Impact/Outreach

The 2015 Leave No Trace Hot Spot program raised awareness about 12 parks and protected areas around the country facing threat of irreversible damage from recreational impact. Leave No Trace personnel trained key volunteers and agency staff on how to effectively communicate Leave No Trace to the visiting public in hopes in curbing the negative behaviors affecting the parks. Hot Spots also generated significant regional and local media regarding the value of Leave No Trace.

During the 12 Hot Spots Leave No Trace interacted with over 5,000 key stakeholders including: park employees, volunteers, trail crew members, local community members and visiting recreationists. These key stakeholders now have the capacity to share Leave No Trace education to the over 5.5 million visitors that visit these parks and protected areas annually.

Trainings & Service Projects

Leave No Trace conducted more than 90 workshops, trainings, and service projects over the course of the 12 Hot Spot Weeks. The trainings included general Leave No Trace trainings (techniques and ethics) and specialized trainings on how to effectively communicate Leave No Trace information to recreational users in these highly impacted areas. Additionally, several of the Hot Spot events successfully engaged hundreds of volunteers through service projects such as trash clean-ups, invasive species removals and trail maintenance projects.

Outreach	Number Of Trainings
Service Projects	15
Agency/Trail Crew/Volunteer Trainings	18
General Public Trainings (Including REI Trainings)	18
Information Booths	16
Educational Visits & Youth Programs	22
Trainer Courses	3
Total	93

Media

Media coverage became an increasingly important component of the Hot Spot program during 2015. There were numerous media outreach events held on-site during the Hot Spot weeks including: Both agency employees and Leave No Trace staff worked hard to get information out about the individual Hot Spots and the events taking place during the 12 weeks out to different local and national media outlets. The 2015 Hot Spots garnered media attention in print, broadcast news, online outlets and radio with the total media circulation reaching over 18 million impressions.

Type of Media Outlet	Number of Features
Print	15
Radio	2
Online	32
Broadcast	1
Total	50

Social Media

Social media is becoming an increasingly important vehicle for reaching the general public. This year the Leave No Trace personnel was successful in using various social media outlets to gain public interest about the 2015 Hot Spot events. Three Hot Spots took part in social media takeovers in which the Hot Spot location's Facebooks featured posts centered around Leave No Trace and the trainings and workshops taking place during the week. These posts were featured on their specific US Forest Service Facebook pages and area partner pages.

At least one post from each Hot Spot was featured on the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics Facebook Timeline. There were a total of 33 posts focused on individual Hot Spot locations, the 2015 site selections and 2016 Hot Spot Nomination reaching over a quarter million Facebook users. Information about the Hot Spot events was also featured on the Leave No Trace Twitter.

2016

The Hot Spot education goes beyond just the people who were present at these trainings. Research shows that 85% of people trained in Leave No Trace share it with others. Participants are now equipped to share Leave No Trace and the importance of low impact practices and ethics with anyone they come in contact, whether it be fellow agency staff members, recreating public, or family and friends. A key component of the Hot Spot programs is that the trainings, workshops, and outreach are not focused on one specific group of stakeholders and were able to reach everyone from youth, to agency employees, to visitors just passing through an area to enjoy a day hike.

Many of the Hot Spot programs featured training in Authority of the Resource for agency employees or volunteers who interact with the recreating public. The focus of the authority of the resource training is how to effectively communicate Leave No Trace practices in order to influence behavior. The goal of this training is to teach visitors to understand how their behaviors are affecting their environment instead of using badges and harsh regulations. Studies show that when visitors understand the impacts of their actions then they are less likely to continue this behavior. Leave No Trace staff found that this was one of the more important trainings at the majority of Hot Spot events.

The departure of the Leave No Trace personnel from Hot Spots does not signify the conclusion of their work with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. Many of these areas had little to no on-site Leave No Trace information or programming in the beginning of the Hot Spot process. In 2016, 11 of the 12, 2015 Hot Spot locations have future plans to implement Leave No Trace into their management and education programs. The ideas for these programs originated from recommendations provided by the Leave No Trace staff at the conclusion of the Hot Spots. Additionally, the Center is willing to provide ongoing support to the various parks and protected areas.

To continually evolve and increase the effectiveness of Leave No Trace Hot Spots, the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics asked for feedback from Hot Spot Event Hosts and the Leave No Trace staff who ran the events about what factors could help strengthen the Hot Spot program. The Center has improved the flow of Hot Spot weeks for the on-site Leave No Trace personnel and the event hosts by designing resource kits to leave with hosts at the conclusion of the events. These kits are designed to provide the hosts with written recommendations and guidance on next steps tailored to the specific Hot Spot.

In 2016, the Center will incorporate more local support into the program by providing funds for Leave No Trace State Advocates to travel to Hot Spot areas. Leave No Trace State Advocates will travel to and take part in Hot Spot events in hopes of creating connections that will provide the event hosts with further support once the Subaru/Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers leave.

2016 Hot Spots

In June of 2015 the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics opened up nominations for the 2016 Hot Spot locations. The Center once again received nominations from all over the country and from a variety of agencies, friends groups and concerned citizens. After receiving a total of 67 nominations, the Center selected 12 new sites for 2016. To continue assisting previous Hot Spot locations in their quest towards recovery, the Center selected four Hot Spots from previous years for tier II support. These four areas were selected to ensure Leave No Trace is implemented and effective.

2016 Hot Spot Locations & Dates

1. March 14 – 21: **Kern River**, Encino, CA
2. March 21 – 28: **Southern Appalachian Trail**, Chattahoochee NF, GA
3. March 28 – April 4: **Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area**, Las Vegas, NV
4. April 11 – 18: **Patapsco Valley State Park**, Ellicott City, MD
5. April 18 – 25: **Breaks Interstate Park**, Breaks, VA
6. June 6 – 13: **Lake Tahoe Region**, South Lake Tahoe, CA
7. June 20 – 27: **Acadia National Park**, Bar Harbor, ME
8. July 11 – 18: **San Juan National Forest**, Durango, CO
9. August 26 – 28: **Shawnee NF**, Jonesboro, IL **(REVISIT)**
10. August 8 – 15: **Devil's Bathtub**, George Washington & Jefferson NF, Roanoke, VA
11. September 8 – 10: **San Juan Islands NM**, Lopez Island, WA **(REVISIT)**
12. September 19 – 26: **Delano Park**, Decatur, AL
13. October 10 – 17: **Mt. Rogers**, Wilson Creek, VA
14. October 17 – 24: **Fayette County Nature Area**, Peachtree City, GA
15. October 27 – 29: **Red River Gorge**, Daniel Boone NF, Stanton, KY **(REVISIT)**
16. November 16 – 18: **St. Andrews State Park**, Panama City, FL **(REVISIT)**

Thank You Leave No Trace Partners

The Leave No Trace Center wants to extend a special thank you all the organizations listed below who took part in the 2015 Hot Spot Event weeks. These programs would not have been such a success without all of your hard work!

Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Arizona Conservation Corp
Arkansas State Parks
Blue Waters Kayaking
Boy Scouts of America
Cape Lookout State Park
Cherry Capital Subaru
City of Phoenix
Colorado Fourteeners Initiative
Girl Scouts of Tucson
Hendrix College
Kayak Tillamook
Mount St. Helens Institute
National Civilian Americorps
National Park Service
North Carolina Outward Bound School
Oregon Coast Visitors Association
Oregon Department of Forestry
Point Reyes National Seashore Association
Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
Saguaro National Park Law Enforcement Volunteers
South Beach State Park
Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS)
Student Conservation Association
Texas University Botany Club
Texas Conservation Corp
Tillamook County Natural Resources
Tillamook Forest Center
United States Forest Service
University of Arizona – Tucson
University of Central Arkansas
Ventana Wilderness Alliance
Wild South