



Pack it in, Pack it Out

Note: Arrangements for this activity must be made a week or two in advance. Find a location that is littered with garbage. For example, a roadside, a park, or a high school parking lot right after school. This activity can also be conducted during organized cleanup projects sponsored by groups that have "adopted" road segments or recreation sites. If you cannot find a littered area near you, simulate one at or near your meeting site.

GRABBING YOUR GROUP'S ATTENTION

Travel to the site. Have your group observe the littered site and record in writing what they think of this situation and how it makes them feel. Present each member of the group with a garbage bag and with the challenge to make the area look more pleasant.

THE ACTIVITY

Have a contest to see who can collect the most garbage in 5 to 10 minutes. Instruct the group to use care when picking up sharp, rusty, or unsanitary waste. You may wish to have participants bring light gloves for this activity.

THE DISCUSSION

Discuss what litter is and the effects of litter in general. Discuss the effects of litter in the backcountry. Divide participants into pairs and have them devise a plan for packing out their garbage on their next trip into the backcountry. Discuss each plan. How do one-pot meals contribute to the creation of less bulk and therefore less garbage? What, if anything, can an individual do about the litter of other backpackers?