

LEAVE NO TRACE ASSESSMENT

youth program

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Staff	No staff have received Leave No Trace training	At least one full-time staff member has completed a Leave No Trace training at any level	Multiple staff members have completed Leave No Trace training at any level	Multiple staff have completed any level of Leave No Trace training AND at least 1 staff member is certified Leave No Trace Level 1 or Level 2 Instructor	Multiple staff have completed any level of Leave No Trace training AND at least 2 staff members are certified Leave No Trace Level 1 or Level 2 Instructors
Training Opportunities	No Leave No Trace training is offered to staff	Program encourages staff to take the 101 Course or other Leave No Trace workshop	Program facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff onboarding	Program facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff annually	Program facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff during onboarding and annually
Practices	No internal guidance related to best Leave No Trace practices	Staff and youth encouraged to be minimally impactful during program, but no guidance on best practices is provided	Guidance on Leave No Trace sometimes in place and followed by staff and youth, but it is not locally tailored	Guidance on Leave No Trace that is aligned with local best practices sometimes in place and followed by staff and youth	Guidance on Leave No Trace that is aligned with local best practices consistently in place and followed by staff and youth
Communications	No communications related to Leave No Trace	Minimum impact messaging included in communications	Communications sometimes include Leave No Trace messaging, but it is not tailored to the program	Communications sometimes include Leave No Trace messaging that is tailored to the program	Communications consistently include Leave No Trace messaging that is tailored to the program
Program Curriculum	No program curriculum related to Leave No Trace utilized	Program integrates minimum impact information into curriculum but not Leave No Trace educational materials	Program integrates at least one Leave No Trace educational material into curriculum	Program integrates at least two Leave No Trace educational materials into curriculum	Program integrates at least three Leave No Trace educational materials into curriculum
Youth Engagement	Program participants are not engaged in the interpretation or expression of Leave No Trace	Program participants are rarely given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program OR their daily lives	Program participants are sometimes given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program OR their daily lives	Program participants are consistently given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program OR their daily lives	Program participants are consistently given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program AND their daily lives
Additional Sustainability Measures	Program does not currently incorporate sustainability measures	Program incorporates at least one sustainability practice such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation during meals, renewable energy use, etc.	Program incorporates at least two sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation during meals, renewable energy use, etc.	Program incorporates at least three sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation during meals, renewable energy use, etc.	Program incorporates at least four sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation during meals, renewable energy use, etc.

LEAVE NO TRACE ASSESSMENT

About the Assessment

This instrument is designed for youth serving programs that wish to assess how they are implementing Leave No Trace, at what level it is being implemented, and to identify opportunities for increasing or improving specific aspects of their Leave No Trace efforts. It can be utilized to track progress over time.

This assessment is also utilized as a foundation for Leave No Trace Gold Standard designation. Programs that score **20** and above on the assessment and meet the minimum score requirement for certain sections are eligible to apply for Gold Standard designation. Please contact Leave No Trace directly to work through this process.

Using the Assessment

To use this assessment, go through each section and determine which scoring level best describes your program's current efforts. The Staff section scoring is weighted double (x2) because this section is so critical in allowing for implementation elsewhere.

The following provides specific information about each section of the Leave No Trace Assessment and examples for each criteria. Please review the information before proceeding with the assessment, as it will help ensure an understanding of each of the assessment criteria.

CRITERIA 1-2: STAFF & TRAINING

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Staff	No staff have received Leave No Trace training	At least one full-time staff member has completed a Leave No Trace training at any level	Multiple staff members have completed Leave No Trace training at any level	Multiple staff have completed any level of Leave No Trace training AND at least 1 staff member is certified Leave No Trace Level 1 or Level 2 Instructor	Multiple staff have completed any level of Leave No Trace training AND at least 2 staff members are certified Leave No Trace Level 1 or Level 2 Instructors
Training Opportunities	No Leave No Trace training is offered to staff	Program encourages staff to take the 101 Course or other Leave No Trace workshop	Program facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff onboarding	Program facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff annually	Program facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff during onboarding and annually

The presence of Leave No Trace training is an important factor in implementation. It is critical to have a foundational knowledge of Leave No Trace from which to build all other aspects. This includes having staff that are trained in Leave No Trace, as well as having regular opportunities available for staff to participate in formal Leave No Trace training.

This section examines the number of staff who have completed Leave No Trace training at various levels. It also looks at the type and frequency of Leave No Trace training opportunities available to staff.

Regular and consistent training is important to keep current on changes and updates and keep the information front of mind.

In order to achieve Gold Standard designation, the program must score at least one 3 or above in this section. Because staff training is so critical to all aspects of Leave No Trace implementation, the score for this criteria is weighted x2.

1

Staff: At least 1 full-time staff member has received Leave No Trace training at any level. This could be from an online Leave No Trace course, a Subaru Leave No Trace Team workshop, a workshop by other program staff or partners, etc.

Training Opportunities: Staff are encouraged to learn Leave No Trace, but no trainings are facilitated or made available.



2

Staff: Multiple staff members have received Leave No Trace training at any level.

Training Opportunities: Leave No Trace training at any level is made available as part of onboarding for staff. This could be through providing time for training, funding for training, or facilitating the training internally or through partners.



4

Staff: Multiple staff have received Leave No Trace training at any level AND 2 staff members are certified Level 1 or Level 2 Instructors. The certification must be current.

Training Opportunities: Leave No Trace training is made available annually and during onboarding for staff.



3

Staff: Multiple staff have received Leave No Trace training at any level AND 1 staff member is a certified Level 1 or Level 2 Instructor. The certification must be current.

Training Opportunities: Leave No Trace training is made available annually for staff.

CRITERIA 3: PRACTICES

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Practices	No internal guidance related to best Leave No Trace practices	Staff and youth encouraged to be minimally impactful during program, but no guidance on best practices is provided	Guidance on Leave No Trace sometimes in place and followed by staff and youth, but it is not locally tailored.	Guidance on Leave No Trace that is aligned with local best practices sometimes in place and followed by staff and youth	Guidance on Leave No Trace that is aligned with local best practices consistently in place and followed by staff and youth

Modeling Leave No Trace practices during programs is a critical way to not only minimize the impact of your programs, but to educate youth. For many youth, the skills and practices learned during programs are the skills and practices they will replicate when visiting outdoor areas with parents or guardians, and they will take these skills home to their families.

This section of the assessment examines if guidance around Leave No Trace best practices for programs are provided for both staff and youth. This could include protocols and process for disposing of waste, storing food, setting up camp, adjusting for weather, etc. If there are certain materials needed to implement these practices, such as WAG bags or bear canisters, these should be provided.

Having program wide policies around Leave No Trace ensures best practices are utilized by all staff and demonstrates that practicing Leave No Trace is highly valued.

1

Staff and youth are encouraged to be minimally impactful, but there is no guidance or protocols on how this to do this or how it applies to programs.

Without proper guidance and protocols in place, impacts can easily occur when people are uninformed, misinformed, or do not have the required materials to follow best practices.



2

There may be some guidance, protocols, or processes in place pertaining to Leave No Trace, but they are not locally tailored.

For example, the program has general guidance on how to dispose of human waste, but not specific guidance on how to dispose of human waste based on the local best practices.



4

There are guidance, protocols, or processes in place at the property pertaining to Leave No Trace that are in line with local best practices, and they are not consistently implemented across all programs.



3

There is some guidance, protocols, or processes in place pertaining to Leave No Trace that are in line with local best practices, but they are not consistently followed or implemented across all programs.

CRITERIA 4: COMMUNICATION

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Communications	No communications related to Leave No Trace	Minimum impact messaging included in communications	Communications sometimes include Leave No Trace messaging, but it is not tailored to the program	Communications sometimes include Leave No Trace messaging that is tailored to the program	Communications consistently include Leave No Trace messaging that is tailored to the program

Youth programs create a unique opportunity for not only reaching youth, but parents, guardians, and teachers as well. Including Leave No Trace in communications with parents, guardians, and teachers will further spread this information and makes it possible for youth to continue their learning even after they leave your program.

This section examines the information that is provided within program communications. Communications could include emails to parents, guardians, or teachers, newsletters, websites, packing lists, social media posts, etc. By including Leave No Trace in these communications, we can equip parents, guardians, and teachers to continue the learning even after the program is complete.

1

The information provided is minimum impact but not Leave No Trace. As an example, parents, guardians, teachers are told to "Pack It In, Pack It Out," but not about Leave No Trace or the 7 Principles.

Part of the effectiveness of the Leave No Trace message is consistency. Youth may see similar messages and concepts at various parks and protected areas around the country. We encourage using Leave No Trace specifically to tap into this broader message.



2

The information or educational message sometimes include Leave No Trace, but it is not tailored to the program. As an example, communication includes Leave No Trace, but not how or why it is relevant to the specific local area, activity, or ecosystem where the program takes place.

It is always best to tailor the message to the local area or specific activity. This makes the information relevant.



4

The information includes Leave No Trace and how it applies to the local area, specific activity, or ecosystem where the program takes place, and it is consistently provided across multiple outlets.



3

The information includes Leave No Trace and how it applies to the local area, specific activity, or ecosystem where the program takes place, but it is not consistently provided across multiple outlets.

For example, it is on the website but not sent to parents, guardians, or teachers.

CRITERIA 5: PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Program Curriculum	No program curriculum related to Leave No Trace utilized	Program integrates minimum impact information into curriculum but not Leave No Trace educational materials	Program integrates at least one Leave No Trace educational material into curriculum	Program integrates at least two Leave No Trace educational materials into curriculum	Program integrates at least three Leave No Trace educational materials into curriculum

Educational resources, tools, and teaching aides allow program staff to better relate Leave No Trace to participants within the context of their program, the environment, or individuals' personal lives. For some, Leave No Trace can be a big idea that is difficult to relate to in certain circumstances. It is important to embrace using educational resources, tools, and teaching aides to help make Leave No Trace more relevant to the lives of youth participants, both through your program and in their everyday lives.

This section examines what Leave No Trace education resources are actively used in an organization's youth programs. These educational materials could include: Bigfoot's Playbook, PEAK, 101 Ways to Teach Leave No Trace, Skills & Ethics booklets, Reference Cards, or other resources from Leave No Trace's Youth Educator Library.

These educational materials have been evaluated and shown to be effective tools in experiential youth education.

1

The program integrates minimum impact information into curriculum but not Leave No Trace educational materials. As an example, youth learn about local wildlife and how to protect them, but not in the context of Leave No Trace or with the use of any Leave No Trace educational materials.

2

The program integrates at least one Leave No Trace educational material into curriculum. For example, youth complete activities from Bigfoot's Playbook.

Using Leave No Trace educational materials provides access to our extensive research in recreation ecology and effective tools for experiential youth education.



4

The program integrates at least three Leave No Trace educational materials into curriculum. For example, youth complete activities from Bigfoot's Playbook, learn information about the local ecosystem from the corresponding Skills & Ethics booklet, and watch videos from the video library, are given Reference Cards, or complete the Social Media Discussion Guide, etc.

3

The program integrates at least two Leave No Trace educational materials into curriculum. For example, youth complete activities from Bigfoot's Playbook, and learn information about the local ecosystem from the corresponding Skills & Ethics booklet.



CRITERIA 6: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Youth Engagement	Program participants are not engaged in the interpretation or expression of Leave No Trace	Program participants are rarely given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program OR their daily lives	Program participants are sometimes given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program OR their daily lives	Program participants are consistently given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program OR their daily lives	Program participants are consistently given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program AND their daily lives

Creative expression and interpretation is one method for youth to demonstrate their understanding of Leave No Trace and deepen their connection to the material. Giving youth participants the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of responsibility in the outdoors helps to solidify their understanding of the concepts surrounding outdoor ethics.

This section examines what opportunities for interpretation and expression are provided to youth. These opportunities could include the chance for them to teach Leave No Trace concepts themselves, to create their own 7 Principles for the program, to create skits, songs, posters, drawings, or other expressions of Leave No Trace, etc.

These interpretations and expressions can relate to how Leave No Trace applies during the program or how it will apply to their daily lives after the program is complete. The most effective way for youth to engage with Leave No Trace is to have the opportunity to interpret and express BOTH how it applies to the program and their daily lives.

1

The program participants are rarely given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program OR their daily lives. For example, after youth learn about Leave No Trace they are occasionally given the opportunity to create a poster about how they will practice it in the daily life, but this is not a regular part of the program.

2

The program participants are sometimes given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program OR their daily lives. For example, after youth learn about Leave No Trace, they are sometimes given the chance to teach their own activity on one of the principles, but this is not consistently part of the program.



4

The program participants are sometimes given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program OR their daily lives. For example, after youth learn about Leave No Trace, they are consistently given the chance to create their own principles for how they will practice Leave No Trace during the program AND create a poster about how they will practice it at home.

3

The program participants are sometimes given opportunities to interpret Leave No Trace in their own way and express how it applies to the program OR their daily lives. For example, after youth learn about Leave No Trace, they are consistently given the chance to create their own principles for how they will practice Leave No Trace during the program, but they do not express how they practice it at home.



CRITERIA 7: SUSTAINABILITY

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Additional Sustainability Measures	Organization does not currently incorporate sustainability measures.	Organization incorporates at least one sustainability practice such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation for trip meals, renewable energy use, etc.	Organization incorporates at least two sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation for trip meals, renewable energy use, etc.	Organization incorporates at least three sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation for trip meals, renewable energy use, etc.	Organization incorporates at least four sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation for trip meals, renewable energy use, etc.

While Leave No Trace focuses on outdoor recreation, other sustainable and planet-friendly practices are important components of protecting and preserving our natural world. This criteria examines any additional sustainability measures that might be in place at the organization.

These include the practices listed on the assessment, but if your organization is incorporating planet-friendly practices that are not listed, please still include them in your assessment, as this is not an exhaustive list.

We recognize that these practices are not accessible to all sites, and there may be barriers related to cost, infrastructure, or other resources that make a practice out of reach. The assessment is designed for a program to still achieve designation without needing to incorporate these additional practices, but we encourage it where feasible.

