LEAVE NO TRACE ASSESSMENT
program

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Staff (x2)	No staff have received Leave No Trace training	At least one full-time staff member has completed a Leave No Trace trining at any level	Multiple staff members are Leave No Trace trained at any level	Multiple staff have completed any level of Leave No Trace training AND at least 1 staff member is a 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 and volunteers	Organization encourages staff and/or volunteers to take the 101 Course or other Leave No Trace training	Organization facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff and/or volunteer onboarding	Organization facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff and/or volunteers annually	Organization facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff and/or volunteers during onboarding and annually
Practices	No internal guidance related to best Leave No Trace practices	Staff and volunteers encouraged to be minimally impactful, but no guidance on best practices are provided	Guidance on Leave No Trace sometimes in place and followed by staff and volunteers, but is not locally tailored	Guidance on Leave No Trace sometimes in place and followed by staff and volunteers that is aligned with local best practices	Guidance on Leave No Trace consistently in place and followed by staff and volunteers that is aligned with local best practices
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 Offerings	No programs that include Leave No Trace offered	Minimum impact information included in programs	Programs sometimes include Leave No Trace information, but it is not locally tailored	Programs sometimes include Leave No Trace education that is locally tailored	Programs consistently include Leave No Trace education that is locally tailored
Partnership with Land & Water Managers	Organization does not interface with land and water managers	Organization rarely interfaces with local land and water management agencies	Organization sometimes interfaces with local land and water management agencies	Organization consistently interfaces with local land and water management agencies	Organization consistently interfaces with local land and water management agencies, and provide some level of support
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, renewable energy use, dark sky preservation, etc.	Organization incorporates at least two sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation, renewable energy use, dark sky preservation, etc.	Organization incorporates at least three sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation, renewable energy use, dark sky preservation, etc.	Organization incorporates at least four sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation, renewable energy use, dark sky preservation, etc.

LEAVE NO TRACE ASSESSMENT

About the Assessment

This instrument is designed for outdoor education or conservation 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. Organizations 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 organization'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.

LEAVE NO TRACE
GOLD STANDARD
PROGRAM

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Staff (x2)	No staff have received Leave No Trace training	At least one full-time staff member has completed a Leave No Trace trining at any level	Multiple staff members are Leave No Trace trained at any level	Multiple staff have completed any level of Leave No Trace training AND at least 1 staff member is a 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 and volunteers	Organization encourages staff and/or volunteers to take the 101 Course or other Leave No Trace training	Organization facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff and/or volunteer onboarding	Organization facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff and/or volunteers annually	Organization facilitates or makes available Leave No Trace training for staff and/or volunteers 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 organization 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 organization 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.

LEAVE NO TRACE
GOLD STANDARD
PROGRAM

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

Following Leave No Trace practices during any program work is a critical way to not only minimize the impact of your program, but to spread education to staff and volunteers.

This section of the assessment examines if guidance around Leave No Trace best practices for program work are provided for both staff and volunteers. This could include protocols and process for disposing of waste, completing trail work, 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 organization wide policies around Leave No Trace ensures best practices are utilized by all staff and volunteers and demonstrates that practicing Leave No Trace is highly valued by the organization.

1

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to be minimally impactful, but there is no guidance or protocols on how this applies to program work.

Without proper guidance and protocols in place, impacts can easily occur when people are uniformed, 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 specific to local best practices.

For example, the organization 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 pertaining to Leave No Trace that are in line with local best practices, and they are not consistently implemented across all program work.

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 the majority of program work.

LEAVE NO TRACE
GOLD STANDARD
PROGRAM

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

Including Leave No Trace in communications with volunteers, members, or donors will further spread this information and makes it possible for learning to continue and be reinforced outside of in person programming.

This section examines the information that is provided within program communications. Communications could include emails to volunteers, members, or donors, newsletters, websites, social media posts, etc. By including Leave No Trace in these communications, we can equip our community with a deeper understanding of Leave No Trace.

1

The information provided is minimum impact but not Leave No Trace. As an example, newsletters or websites say to "Pack It In, Pack It Out," but do not reference Leave No Trace or the 7 Principles.

Part of the effectiveness of the Leave No Trace message is consistency. People 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 not 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 included in other communications.

LEAVE NO TRACE
GOLD STANDARD
PROGRAM

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Program Offerings	No programs that include Leave No Trace offered	Minimum impact information included in programs	Programs sometimes include Leave No Trace information, but it is not locally tailored	Programs sometimes include Leave No Trace education that is locally tailored	Programs consistently include Leave No Trace education that is locally tailored

Programs provide a unique opportunity for Leave No Trace education. While program offerings my vary depending on the type of work your organization does, we encourage the inclusion of Leave No Trace education whenever participants, members, or volunteers are gathered.

The assessment looks at how Leave No Trace included in program offerings and at what level. For program offerings that are public facing including volunteer projects, educational events, outreach, etc. this would refer to the Leave No Trace information that is presented to the public throughout these offerings. For internal programs, this would refer to how staff or volunteers learn Leave No Trace during the program.

Because there is so much variety in the type of programs and organizations, please use your best judgement for this section. If you are unsure, reach out to Leave No Trace for clarification.

1

The program offerings include minimum impact information but do not reference Leave No Trace. As an example, staff or participants 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. We encourage using Leave No Trace specifically to tap into this broader message.

2

The program offerings sometimes include Leave No Trace, but the information is not locally tailored. As an example, staff or participants are told about 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 to the participant and enhances their experience.

4

The program offerings include information about Leave No Trace and how it applies to the local area, specific activity, or ecosystem, and it is not consistently provided in the majority of program offerings.

3

The program offerings sometimes include information about Leave No Trace and how it applies to the local area, specific activity, or ecosystem, but it is not consistently provided in the majority of program offerings.

CRITERIA 6: PARTNERSHIPS

LEAVE NO TRACE
GOLD STANDARD
PROGRAM

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Partnership with Land & Water Managers	Organization does not interface with land and water managers	Organization rarely interfaces land and water management agencies where trips are held	Organization sometimes interfaces with land and water management agencies where trips are held	Organization consistently interfaces with land and water management agencies where trips are held	Organization consistently interfaces with land and water management agencies where trips are held, and provides some level of support

The public lands that visitors come to enjoy require all our effort to protect and preserve. A community wide approach is the best way to ensure continued preservation of our outdoor areas.

The assessment looks at how the organization interfaces with land and water managers for parks and protected areas where program work takes place. This could be in the form of regular communication, attending events or listening sessions, or providing support through volunteering, donations of funds or resources, conditions reporting, or other assistance.

We encourage consistent interfacing between programs and land and water managers to ensure everyone is one the same page about potential impacts, seasonal changes, best practices, regulations, etc.

1

The organization rarely interfaces with the land and water management agencies where programs take place. This refers to communications only on an as needed basis. For example, the organization only communicates with the agencies when a special use permit needs to be reauthorized.

2

The organization sometimes interfaces with the land and water management agencies where programs take place. This could mean communicating with the land and water management agencies annually or on a semi regular basis.

Interfacing could refer to direct communications or attending listening sessions, trainings, or other events put on by the local land and water management agencies.

4

The organization consistently interfaces with the land and water management agencies where programs take place and provides support in the form of volunteer time, donations of funds or resources, conditions reporting, or other assistance.

3

The organization consistently interfaces with the land and water management agencies where programs take place. This could mean communicating with the land and water management agencies multiple times a year or on a regular basis.

This communication keeps the organization appraised of concerning impacts, changes to regulations or practices, or other important updates.

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, renewable energy use, dark sky preservation, etc.	Organization incorporates at least two sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation, renewable energy use, dark sky preservation, etc.	Organization incorporates at least three sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation, renewable energy use, dark sky preservation, etc.	Organization incorporates at least four sustainability practices such as: recycling or composting, single-use plastic mitigation, renewable energy use, dark sky preservation, 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 site to still achieve designation without needing to incorporate these additional practices, but we encourage it where feasible.

1
The organization has implemented at least one sustainability measure. This could include recycling or composting, renewable energy use in program logistics, single-use plastic mitigation, etc.

2
The organization has implemented at least two sustainability measures. This could include recycling or composting, renewable energy use in program logistics, single-use plastic mitigation, etc.

4
The organization has implemented at least four sustainability measures. This could include recycling or composting, renewable energy use in program logistics, single-use plastic mitigation, etc.

3
The organization has implemented at least three sustainability measures. This could include recycling or composting, renewable energy use in program logistics, single-use plastic mitigation, etc.