

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 training 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
Operations & Policies	No internal policies, procedures, or formal guidance related to Leave No Trace.	Basic sustainability practices are included in operations, but no specific reference to Leave No Trace in policies or procedures.	Leave No Trace is included in some policies or procedures, but guidance is general and not tailored to the local environment.	Policies and procedures include Leave No Trace practices that are tailored to the local environment and are sometimes implemented.	Policies and procedures include Leave No Trace practices that are tailored to the local environment and are consistently implemented across operations.
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 **25 and above** on the assessment and **meet the minimum score requirement for certain sections** are eligible to apply for Gold Standard designation. Organizations also must maintain a Leave No Trace partnership or equivalent agreement to be eligible for designation. Please contact GoldStandard@LNT.org for more information on how to apply for designation.

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.

CRITERIA 1-2: STAFF & TRAINING

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 training 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 3 in the Staff criteria. 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.

CRITERIA 3: OPERATIONS & POLICIES

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
Operations & Policies	No internal policies, procedures, or formal guidance related to Leave No Trace.	Basic sustainability practices are included in operations, but no specific reference to Leave No Trace in policies or procedures.	Leave No Trace is included in some policies or procedures, but guidance is general and not tailored to the local environment.	Policies and procedures include Leave No Trace practices that are tailored to the local environment and are sometimes implemented.	Policies and procedures include Leave No Trace practices that are tailored to the local environment and are consistently implemented across operations.

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 evaluates how Leave No Trace is incorporated into an organization's operations through policies, procedures, and internal guidance. This may include policies for trip planning, disposing of waste, completing trail work, storing food, setting up camp, 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

Basic sustainability or stewardship practices are present, but there is no specific reference to Leave No Trace in policies or procedures.

For example, the organization may promote environmental responsibility or conservation values, but these are not explicitly connected to Leave No Trace principles or formally defined in operational guidance.

2

Some policies or procedures reference Leave No Trace, but guidance is general and not tailored to the organization's programs or operating environments.

For example, Leave No Trace may be included in high-level materials or staff guidance, but it does not reflect the specific types of programs offered, ecosystems visited, or conditions encountered.

4

Policies and procedures include Leave No Trace practices tailored to the organization's programs and operating environments and are consistently implemented across all programs.

Leave No Trace is consistently applied across programs and locations, reinforcing a culture of stewardship for staff and participants alike.

3

Policies and procedures include Leave No Trace practices tailored to the organization's programs and operating environments, but they are only sometimes implemented.

For example, locally relevant and program-specific practices may be defined for certain programs, staff teams, or locations, but are not consistently applied across the organization.

CRITERIA 4: COMMUNICATIONS

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.

CRITERIA 5: PROGRAM OFFERINGS

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 may 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 is 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

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 on 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 apprised 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.

