

PRT 3040 – NRL: Environmental Ethics, Leave No Trace, and Leadership Curriculum and Syllabus
National Outdoor Leadership School with the
University of Utah, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
Natural Resources Learning Program

Course Curriculum Description: Second only to safety, wildland ethics and management is central to the curriculum of both NOLS and the University of Utah’s Natural Resources Learning program within the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. The objective of preserving the lands we use for the future affects every moment of our courses. Understanding the complexity, diversity, and fragility of these wildlands guides how and where we teach, eat, sleep, travel, and learn skills. Based on scientific and empirical understanding of ecosystems, an ethic evolves to guide how we manage our field courses. Students learn the guiding principles behind land manager’s decisions and regulations. Students take from these courses the knowledge, skills, and ability to lead others in wild places in an ethical way.

Over 30 hours of specific classes and demonstrations in addition to the modeling of behaviors by instructors will guide students in their understanding and application of wilderness ethics throughout a course. Every instructor has the academic freedom to arrange the learning process to custom fit each environment, to serve each group of students. Most instructors offer the following core information:

- An historical perspective of environmental thought
- A Wildland Ethic based on ecology
- A Wildland Ethic applied to outdoor recreation
- Personal Responsibility: implications of a land ethic and leave no trace
- A Global Perspective: widening the circle of awareness to other cultures and environments
- The Role of Wilderness Education in the Evolution of an Ethic – NOLS and LNT
- Federal Land Management in the United States
- United States Forest Service – National Park Service – Bureau of Land Management
- National Wilderness Preservation System – The Wilderness Act of 1964
- Citizen Involvement – Beyond the backcountry

Leave No Trace (LNT) is a guideline of ethical use and behaviors in wild places developed by NOLS in collaboration with Federal land managing agencies.

LNT core principles are:

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|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Plan ahead and prepare | Minimize campfire impacts |
| Travel and camp on durable surfaces | Respect Wildlife |
| Dispose of waste properly | Be Considerate of other visitors |
| Leave what you find | |

Course Objectives: By the end of the course we expect each student to...

- consistently demonstrate sound minimum impact living and travel skills on personal and group levels; be able to extrapolate knowledge to varied settings
- understand the history of, and consider potential solutions to, pertinent environmental issues
- understand the function, organization, and local concerns of state and federal land managers
- make plans for the transference of wilderness ethics and practices into daily personal and professional life

Letter Grades, By Percent:

93-100% A, 90-92 A-, 88-89% B+, 83-87% B, 80-82% B-, 78-79% C+, 73-77% C, 70-72% C-, etc.

Text Resources:

An Introduction to Wildland Ethics and Management (1992) Brame and Henderson.
Ethical Issues in Experiential Education (1994) Hunt, J.
Leave No Trace Skills and Ethics, Volumes 1 – 16
NOLS Environmental Notebook (2002) Eds. Gookin and Wells.
Wilderness and the American Mind, 4th. Ed. (2001) Nash, R.
Wilderness Educator's Notebook (1999) Ed. Gookin, J.

Selected Lessons from the NOLS Environmental Studies Curriculum:**Defining Environmental Education:**

1. NOLS Philosophy of Education
2. NOLS Expectations for Environmental Studies
3. Spirituality, the Softer Side of Education
4. Teaching Values at NOLS: Values define who we are, what we do, and how we do it

Defining Ethics: the study of competing moral values.

1. Learning Ethics: What the Research Says
2. Defining a Wildland Ethic
3. Self-discipline, Needs vs. Wants; Morals and Values for Leaders in Wilderness and Environmental Education
4. Wildlands and People, What is your connection? (Activity)
5. Aldo Leopold's: **A Land Ethic**
6. Personal Responsibility, Implications of a Land Ethic
7. Environmental Ethics and the **Lorax** by Dr. Seuss

Leave No Trace (LNT), A Guideline for Ethical Use of Wildlands

1. Reading the Land: A Basic Ecology Lesson
2. LNT: The Seven Ecologically Based LNT Guidelines for Ethical Wilderness Use
3. LNT Trainer Curriculum, Student Teaching in LNT
4. LNT for Diverse Environments

Land Management and Ethics:

1. U.S. Land Management History
2. National Environmental Policy Act (N.E.P.A.); The Wilderness Act; The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
3. Local Public Policy Issues
4. Global Environmental Issues
5. Land Management Debate (Activity)

Environmental Leadership:

1. NOLS Group Leadership Techniques
2. What does a Responsible NOLS Alum Look Like?
3. Teaching LNT, without Offending, to Your Friends Back Home
4. Introduction to **"Soft Sidewalks"**
5. Advocacy for wildlands

Curriculum Contacts:

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