

The Great Outdoors— Not So Great Anymore?



Did you know?

Invasive species are infiltrators that invade and cause harm to ecosystems beyond their historic range. Their invasion can threaten native ecosystems or commercial, agricultural, or recreational activities dependent on these ecosystems. They may even harm the health of humans. Human actions, both unintentional and intentional, are the primary means of invasive species introductions and spread to new locations.

The use of **pesticides** can negatively impact fish and wildlife, including fisheries resources, threatened and endangered species, migratory birds and their habitats. Pesticides include products, such as insect repellants, weed killers, disinfectants and swimming pool chemicals, which are designed to prevent, destroy, repel or reduce pests such as insects, mice and other animals, weeds, fungi, bacteria and viruses. Pesticides are used in nearly every home, business, farm, school, hospital and park in the United States and are found almost everywhere in our environment. In fact, recent studies of major rivers and streams documented that 96% of all fish, 100% of all surface water samples and 33% of major aquifers contained one or more pesticides at detectable levels. Pesticides were identified as one of the 15 leading stream pollutants.

The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution calls **nutrient pollution** the most widespread, chronic environmental problem in the coastal ocean. The discharges of nitrogen, phosphorus, and other nutrients come from agriculture, waste disposal, coastal development, and fossil fuel use. Once nutrient pollution reaches the coastal zone, it stimulates harmful overgrowths of algae, which can have direct toxic effects. Zooplankton eat the toxic algae and begin passing the toxins up the food chain, affecting edibles like clams, and ultimately working their way up to seabirds, marine mammals, and humans. The result can be illness and sometimes death.

. . . and there's more—much more.

What can you do? Learn, take action, get recognized!
Some examples . . .

If you're a Cub Scout or Webelos Scout,



- Understand why it's important to protect the environment—our air and water.
- Get involved with your Pack in community clean-up activities and other outdoor service projects.
- Earn a Hornaday Unit Certificate.

If you're a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout,



- Earn the various merit badges that have to do with conservation and the environment.
- Understand the principles of Leave No Trace (LNT).
- Get involved in outdoor service projects for rank advancement.
- Teach LNT principles to your unit. Practice LNT on camp-outs.
- Earn a Hornaday Award—the badge or one of the medals, the unit certificate.

If you're a Venturer or Sea Scout,




- Complete the Leave No Trace Ranger core requirement and the requirements for two conservation-related Ranger electives—Ecology and Plants & Wildlife.
- Provide opportunities for other units to participate in outdoor service projects—lead.
- Understand the principles of Leave No Trace (LNT).
- Teach LNT principles to your unit and to other Scout units—crews, troops, and packs.
- Earn a Hornaday Award—the badge or one of the medals, the unit certificate.

"The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonder and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction."

Rachel Carson

If you are a youth member of the OA, 

- Understand the nature and responsibilities of cheerful service—the OA is more than a pocket flap.
- Develop practical ways to put cheerful service into practice in the outdoors—to help Scout units and the Scouts carry out the activities exemplified above.
- Demonstrate leadership and good example: earn a Hornaday Award—the badge or one of the medals, the unit certificate.

If you are an adult member of the OA, 

- Understand the nature and responsibilities of cheerful service—the OA is more than a pocket flap.
- Develop practical ways to put cheerful service into practice in the outdoors—to help Arrowmen help Scout units and the Scouts carry out the activities exemplified above.
- Complete a Project WILD course.
- Use Project WILD activities in lodge learning activities.
- Become a Hornaday Award Advisor (take the course at University of Scouting).
- Become a Leave No Trace Master Educator.
- Earn the SHAC Adult Conservation Award and/or a Hornaday Gold Badge.
- With your unit, earn the Hornaday Unit Certificate.

If you are an adult unit leader,   

- Understand the issues and responsibilities we have as Scouts to protect the outdoors and to encourage conservation efforts in our units—especially outdoor service projects.
- Encourage your Scouts to think about the issues and how they can positively impact what's happening—remember: in this area, we want to teach our youth how to think, not what to think.
- Complete a Project WILD course.
- Use Project WILD activities in unit learning activities.
- Become a Hornaday Award Advisor (take the course at University of Scouting).
- Earn the SHAC Adult Conservation Award and/or a Hornaday Gold Badge.
- With your unit, earn the Hornaday Unit Certificate.

***No matter who you are or what you do,
go outside and explore the wonders of our natural world
at a National Wildlife Refuge, a local park, or even your own back yard.***

For more information,

<http://www.scouting.org/index.html>

Hornaday Awards, Leave No Trace

<http://www.samhoustonbsa.org/Home/>

Camping, Conservation

<http://scoutingtexas.com/>

Multiple resources

"This we know: the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself."

Attributed to Chief Seattle, 1854