

Highlights:

We encourage a love of nature and an understanding of how to protect it in our Scouts

We enable our Scouts to see how they can Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle in their own lives

We encourage our Scouts to think of ways they can help preserve the environment. On camping trips and excursions into nature, our Scouts develop a deep appreciation for the beauty and majesty of their surroundings. We instill in our Scouts a love of nature, and an understanding of how to protect it.



Our Scouts in turn use their desire to help the environment in many ways everyday, and be stewards of the Earth. Great adventures await our Scouts in the great outdoors, and our Scouts work hard to protect it.

We know youth are not in charge of family decisions but there is plenty they can still do to help. There are three different parts to using fewer resources and they are: reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Everything on earth creates an “eco footprint.” The size of the footprint is the “mark” you are leaving, and is dependent upon how much you take from the earth. Plants and animals also have an eco footprint, but very small ones. Human beings in developing countries leave smaller footprints than we do. Our goal is make our footprints as small as we reasonably can. To meet that goal, below are ways to reduce the mark we all leave on the earth.

## Reduce

In order to attract buyers, products often come in big, flashy packaging which makes it look like that product is better than one with less flashy packaging. We instill our Scouts however the difference between what is on the inside and what is on the outside. If the packaging is going end up in the trash, it did not improve the product in any way. A similar product will work as well but cost less and take up much less space in a landfill. We urge our Scouts to encourage their parents to purchase products with less throw-away material in the supermarket, and also for our Scouts to consider packaging when making a purchase themselves. Toys have particularly flashy packaging because the manufacturers hope to fool youth into thinking a bright package means a better toy. Our Scouts know better though and make informed choices when making a purchase.

When purchasing products, look for an “eco label.” This is a label lets you know the product is a good choice for the environmentally conscious. Unlike green symbols or marks put on the packaging by the manufacturer, the eco label was awarded by an impartial third-party based on meeting environmental leadership criteria. It may not be possible to find a product in every category with an eco label, but purchasing products with an eco label when possible can help the environment. We look for products for eco labels when choosing items for our offices.

Another mark to look for is the Fairtrade Mark. The Fairtrade Mark indicates the producers of the product in developing countries were treated fairly and given a fair day's wage. It is also an indication that the product was created in a sustainable fashion. In the environmental movement, sustainable means meeting the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Quick and easy things you can do to reduce:

- Turn lights off when leaving a room
- Make sure your hose and faucets do not leak
- Replace regular bulbs with fluorescents
- Turn the water off when brushing your teeth
- Car pool

## Reuse

All kinds of things can be reused. Plastic cups and silverware can be washed and used again. Reusable water bottles can replace throw-away bottled water. We encourage our Scouts to think of how little they can throw away. Scouts can make a contest out of it to see how many things can reasonably be reused.

Our Scouts also give their toys away when they outgrow them. Another way to reuse is to give something away when you are finished with it. Toys and books are good choices which can be passed on so someone else can get enjoyment out of them, rather than simply throwing them

away. With parents' permission, our Scouts can even hold a yard sale and make some extra money from the items they do not use any more.

Quick and easy ways to reuse:

- Purchase used books and/ CD's and DVD's
- Purchase vintage clothing or household items
- Give something away when you are finished with it
- Hold a yard sale

## Recycle

Most people living in major cities are familiar with bright blue and green canisters provided by the curb provided by the city. We encourage our Scouts to get to know what is supposed to go in each canister, such as which one is for lawn waste, and which for plastics, and to use them and ask their families to use them. Scouts can help encourage their families to help by taking a more pro-active role themselves; by gathering cans, plastics, and newspapers and taking them out without being asked, Scouts show their commitment and lead by example.

Scouts who live in rural areas may need to put more effort into recycling. If the city does not provide canisters, often there is a recycling plant in town. Scouts can ask their parents to drive them and show their commitment by collecting the items, rinsing them out, and bagging the items themselves. Can recycling plants often pay a person for the cans!

## Quick and easy ways to recycle:

- Use the recycling bins provided
- Collect cans and trade them in for cash
- Ask parents to make sure they recycle motor oil
- Recycle your computer
- When printing from your computer, print on both sides if possible
- Use paper and newspaper again for other uses, such as a liner for a bird cage

## The Importance of Conservation and Youth

Recent studies have found that people who live, work, and play in visually appealing, healthy places with proper amount of sunlight and fresh air, as well as green space, are both happier and more productive. Youth who attend schools with green space, proper shading, air filtering, and other healthy environmental additions see their test scores rise and poor behavior fall. There is no substitute for being in touch with nature and we work for the day every youth can climb a tree, sit in the grass, and chase a butterfly, or see real wildlife.