



Photograph courtesy of Robert Jackson

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Welcome

to Leave No Trace Ireland's first newsletter.



Just in case you think nothing has been happening with Leave No Trace during the past 12 months ... think again... it has been a very busy year for Jane Helps the Co-ordinator of Leave No Trace Ireland, who has regrettably resigned to move to pastures new at the beginning of September 2007.

During the past 12 months, Leave No Trace Ireland's work has focused mainly on:

- Setting up of the legal entity – Leave No Trace Ireland Ltd
- Agreeing with Leave No Trace America the contractual arrangements to permit Leave No Trace Ireland to operate
- Putting in place the necessary administrative systems to allow Leave No Trace Ireland to operate effectively
- Agreeing the funding arrangements with Leave No Trace Ireland's core funding bodies
- Establishing a training calendar and delivering a number of Master Educator and Awareness Sessions across Ireland
- Marketing the Leave No Trace message across Ireland through attendance at events, seminars and the web site, www.leavenotraceireland.org



Anyone who has a keen eye, will see the Leave No Trace message appearing in all sorts of places from trail head signs to brochures and web sites. The spread of the message has been considerable and hopefully, as people begin to see it as a unified message it will begin to percolate the subconscious and effect a real change.

BUT... there is still much more work to be done and immediate priorities are to create a strong recognisable brand for Leave No Trace Ireland. This newsletter is the first public viewing of the new brand, which will become effective in all educational, web site and publicity material associated with Leave No Trace Ireland. Now we will need to encourage new organisations to join the Leave No Trace Ireland Network and support the initiative financially and also in rolling out the message through their daily work. A new calendar of training events is being prepared for the next 12 months and some events have been identified to help us spread the message.

Leave No Trace Principles of Outdoor Ethics:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Be considerate of others
- Respect farm animals and wildlife
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Leave what you find
- Dispose of waste properly
- Minimise the effects of fire

Coillte gives Prominent Position to Leave No Trace Message

Coillte (the Irish Forestry Board) is giving a prominent position to the Leave No Trace message in its major recreation programme which it is rolling out in 2007 with support under the National Development Plan Tourism Measures, administered by Fáilte Ireland. Bill Murphy, Head of Recreation with Coillte, said the programme would see significant developments and upgrading of over 34 sites nationwide ranging from the major mountain bike development in the Ballyhoura Mountains of Cork/Limerick to upgrading and improvements of hiking and walking trails. All sites being worked on currently will include new signage and give a very significant place to the Leave No Trace message. Spreading the Leave No Trace message is important to Coillte as it is seen as a very valuable tool in developing responsible use of forests.



Promoting Leave No Trace on Coillte's new website

Another element of the promotion of the Leave No Trace message by Coillte, is its inclusion on its new recreation website www.coillteoutdoors.ie. Coillte believes this website will become an important resource for people visiting the forests

and countryside and therefore has given the Leave No Trace message a very prominent position on the website. Leave No Trace is not only on the home page with a link to a more detailed Leave No Trace page but has been placed on

every page to reinforce the message. Coillte was the first large organisation to adopt the Leave No Trace message and it forms part of the Company's Recreation Policy, published in 2005.

An Taisce - 'Pack it in Pack it out'

An Taisce and the Blue Flag Programme, in supporting the Leave No Trace ethos, are currently piloting a "Pack It In Pack It Out" initiative at several of Cork's Blue Flag beaches, encouraging beach users to take all their litter home and dispose of it correctly.

Local authorities in Ireland invest substantial sums of money into meeting the Blue Flag criteria and most Irish beaches continue to meet these high standards. However some bathing areas are subjected to tremendous pressure due to vandalism, littering, human-caused dune

destruction and other impacts (loose dogs and dog faeces) over which the public has direct control. Litter accounted for a majority of the issues encountered by An Taisce inspectors on Blue Flag beaches last summer. Everyone has a role in protecting the Blue Flag status of a beach and consequently the Blue Flag office encourages visitors to 'Leave No Trace' when visiting.

To find full information on criteria, blue flag beaches and marinas, maps etc. visit www.blueflagireland.org



Training

Fundamental to the success of Leave No Trace Ireland are its training activities. There are three different levels of courses. The Master Educator course is the highest level of training and consists of a week-long training. Master Educators are trained to teach the next level course, a 16hr long Trainer Course. The Trainers' course is aimed at those people who are in a position to pass on the message and principles of Leave No Trace to others and also those wishing to learn more about Leave No Trace and its skills, ethics, background etc.. Both Master Educators and Leave No Trace Trainers are in turn able to conduct basic training, the lowest level, called Leave No Trace Awareness Workshops, or Sessions. In the future Leave No Trace will largely focus on rolling out Awareness Sessions. These are designed for the general public, and largely consist of awareness and information about Leave No Trace.

Training Course Reports

Report 1

Course Facilitator: Vincent McAlinden, Master Educator of Leave No Trace Ireland
Venue: Ardnabannon Outdoor Education Centre, Castlewellan
Date: 6th & 7th Sept 2007
Course Participants: Instructors from the Education and Library Board Outdoor Education Centres and the membership support officer of the Mountaineering Council for Ireland.

This course was organised by the Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards' Outdoor Education Panel, its aim, the spread of the Leave No Trace message to its Board centres.

The course began with a class-based presentation to introduce and set the scene for the Leave No trace trainers. After this the focus moved outdoors using activities, discussion and debate to encourage the participants to explore a range of teaching and learning styles that can be used to engage an audience with the Leave No Trace message.

Each training course participant brought a prepared 10 minute teaching session along to the course. These teaching sessions framed the content for the rest of the course, one topic for each of the principles. For example, at the Ardnabannon base camp we had a food and equipment auction which was used to explore 'Plan

Ahead and Prepare.' Moving on to Murlough nature reserve we had a variant of an Indian tracking game to teach Travel on Durable Surfaces.

Every Trainers' course requires an overnight and weather permitting, this should be a camp or bivi. One of the tents on show was a Terra Nova superlight 2 person tent with Kevlar pegs - total weight 900g!!! If more of our mountain campers moved light-weight, would they enjoy the experience more and be less inclined to leave stuff behind? An interesting mapping activity allowed the participants to record a 100m radius of medium to heavy impacts from the wall-river junction. An interesting supper of camp-baked banana/mars fritters with fresh bread twisters, cooked on minimal impact hexiburners was followed by a Leave No Trace mound fire and lively debate on how to change behaviours of the 'do it for me' generation.

On the second day, we started by discovering and discussing some of the human impacts in the Trassey valley, both recent (bag of beer cans and the Mourné Way) and centuries old (A quarry track, a ½ split granite block and of course the entire living landscape). The principles of 'Leave what you find' and 'Be Considerate to Others' always stimulate heartfelt debate and that's the essence of Leave No Trace.



It explores what our impacts are on the environment we enjoy and engages ourselves and others, in making informed choices which hopefully can lead to a less damaged land.

The course finished on the lawn in front of Ardnabannon Outdoor Education Centre with the ethics card game which produced an involved discussion about the size of the actual recreational impacts and who is causing them in Northern Ireland along with the barriers facing attempts to reduce them.

Report 2

Course Facilitator: Ann Fitzpatrick, Master Educator of Leave No Trace Ireland
Venue: Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre, Clonbur
Date: 18th & 19th Aug 2007
Course Participants: Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre Staff.

This course was run in the local woods in Clonbur, Co. Galway which the participants use frequently with various groups. It is a karst or limestone region that has remained quite unspoilt. This area was a good choice as all course participants were already familiar with their surroundings making the preparation and presentation of the seven principles that bit easier.



"The Leave No Trace training weekend I recently attended at the Share Holiday Village, Co. Fermanagh was a very informative and enjoyable experience. The course's two instructors, Katy Egan and Richard Lappin provided us with a relaxed, 'learning-friendly' environment and did much to ensure the experience was both 'good craic' and informative. I came away from the weekend having gained a much better appreciation of the principles of Leave No Trace and now look forward to applying the principles in both my work and my day to day life".
 Peter Hughes, Xtreme North West.

"I feel the most useful result of this course was getting one unified message that all staff members could use rather than having everyone giving out slightly mixed messages to client groups. We would all be very passionate about minimising our impact on the outdoors and taking time to discuss how we do this and what the important points are was very interesting. Apart from the learning that took place over the two days we also had lots of fun. Bó the dog was pure entertainment throughout the course and I cannot recommend fillet steak wrapped in fig leaves and roasted in an open mound fire enough. Delicious! A great course that everyone came away from better equipped to deliver a global message to help conserve the outdoors"

John, Pierce, Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre.

WITHIN LEAVE NO TRACE IRELAND:

- Since May 2006 there are currently **13 Master Educators** within Leave No Trace Ireland. This now enables the message of Leave No Trace to be filtered down through the different levels of training.

Leave No Trace Ireland would like to give a big thank you to the Master Educators Ann Fitzpatrick, Vincent McAlinden, Richard Lappin, Katy Egan, Sinead Pollock and Darach O'Murchu who have delivered a number of training courses. Well Done!!

- To date, **10 Trainer courses** have been held in the Wicklow Mountains National Park; Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre in Clonbur; Ardnabannon Outdoor Education Centre in Castlewellan; Share Holiday Village in Fermanagh; Tollymore Mountain Centre in Newcastle and Cappanalea Outdoor Education Centre in Kerry, with approximately 10-13 participants on each course.

- There are currently **86 people qualified as Trainers** of Leave No Trace across Ireland. They include representatives from a wide range of organisations including: Duke of Edinburgh Award, Outdoor Education and Library Board Centres, Mountain Meitheal, Wicklow Mountains National Park, Coillte, CAAN, Belfast Hills Partnership, Catholic Youth Council, Mountaineering Council of Ireland, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Princes Trust, District Councils, An Taisce and Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland.

- Approximately **32 'Awareness Sessions'** have taken place and have included sessions for the following organisations: Irish Wildlife Trust, Mountain Meitheal, Mountaineering Council of Ireland, CAAN, Environment Education Forum, Cycling Ireland, Accenture, Failte Ireland, Ballyhoura Failte, Scouting Ireland, Irish Girl Guides, Focus Ireland, Imaal Walkers, Wicklow Education Centre and Tiglin.

CAAN Promotes Leave No Trace



To show its support for the principles of Leave No Trace, the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN), has agreed that all new activity guides and brochures, trail guides, interpretation panels etc will include, as a minimum, the Leave No Trace logo and where possible will list the 7 principles of Leave No Trace.

Permission from America was received to put the logo on the new long

distance walking guides for the Cuilcagh Way and North Sperrins Way and it was agreed that any future reprints of earlier Waymarked way guides would also include the logo.

The Leave No Trace message is also endorsed every week through CAAN's 'Walk of the Week' printed in Friday's Belfast Telegraph. With a circulation to 247,000 readers, this is another way in which the message is being spread.

Leave No Trace in the Tourism Sector

Tourism is a major contributor to the Irish economy, with overseas tourist visits for 2006 estimated at 7.4m, foreign exchange earnings for the same period at €4.7 billion, and the tourism and hospitality sector currently supporting 12% of jobs in Ireland.

The future success of the tourism industry, however, is inextricably linked to the quality of our environment. Our scenic landscapes, coastline, rivers and lakes, and cultural heritage are the bedrock upon which Irish tourism has been built. The economic viability and competitiveness of the Irish tourism industry can only be sustained if the quality of this raw

material is maintained. Ireland's tourism industry now, more than ever, relies on strong environmental policies.

Tourism itself, if not well managed, has the potential to have a negative impact on the environment. Tourist activities such as walking, angling, soft adventure, water-based activities, horse-riding, and festivals and events, if poorly managed, can result in a range of environmental impacts, such as impacts on wildlife and their habitats, soil erosion, water pollution, litter pollution and disturbance of local communities. The tourism industry must ensure, therefore, that it takes responsibility for its own impact on the

environment. To this end, Fáilte Ireland, as the National Tourism Development Authority, has become a partner of Leave No Trace in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland has a central role to play in ensuring that the principles of sustainable development are at the core of tourism policy and practice. Fáilte Ireland will ensure that all of its promotional material for a range of tourist activities will carry the Leave No Trace logo and the seven principles of Leave No Trace.

Sport Northern Ireland adopts Leave No Trace principles

Sport Northern Ireland has long been an advocate of developing both man-made and natural resources as sites for sustainable sport and physical recreation. There is no greater exciting & dynamic facility than the natural environment in which to participate in sport and physical recreation. While actively encouraging and promoting increasing levels of participation in the countryside and adventure activities, Sport NI recognises the need for participants to have a sensitive and

responsible attitude towards the natural environment. As a policy Sport NI has adopted "Leave No Trace" as an important programme of education and responsible usage, rather than just a code of conduct. It will therefore promote and advocate the "Leave No Trace" Programme to and among countryside recreation users and landowners. In addition it will be making the endorsement and adoption of the "Leave No Trace" Programme as a future condition of award for

investment in countryside recreation and adventure activities. Therefore, Governing Bodies of Sport and organisations who use the natural environment will be expected to sign up to "Leave no Trace" to avail of the funding. Tollymore Mountain Centre, which is run by Sport NI as the National Centre for leadership training in the outdoors, will also be incorporating Leave No Trace principles into its courses and will be running a number of "Leave No Trace" courses.

Awareness Session Reports

Over thirty Girl Guide and Brownie Leaders from the Northwest region attending a conference in Sligo on 6th October 2007 participated in a two hour Leave No Trace Awareness Session given by Leonard Floyd (a trainer of Leave No Trace). Under instruction to keep the session active and participatory, the usual powerpoint presentation was dropped with only an introductory DVD shown to

give a background to the Leave No Trace concept. The session combined an ethical discussion based on the ethics game, a before and after group-work exercise on trip planning and an outdoor session demonstrating practical techniques. Before the event each of the Leaders had received a copy of the Leave no Trace information booklet and were therefore already well versed in environmental

conscious practices. Nevertheless, judging from the course's feedback, all appeared to have benefited from the new perspective.

It is hoped that the Leaders attending the session will now, through a full day workshop or trainer weekend, pass on the message to their brownie and guide pack.

Mountain Meitheal Getting out and giving back

Mountain Meitheal has been involved with Leave No Trace from its beginning when Bill Murphy (then Chairman) first broached the idea of introducing it as a concept to Ireland. As one of Mountain Meitheal's main objectives is "to spread an awareness of sustainable recreation," its members have taken to Leave No Trace with a passion. Mountain Meitheal is a group of volunteers who undertake conservation and restoration on mountain and forest tracks and believe that by spreading the Leave No Trace message it can begin to reduce upland erosion and possibly reduce its workload. Mountain Meitheal promotes the principles of Leave No Trace at every opportunity, through its workdays, website (www.pathsavers.org), literature, at outdoor

events, meetings and seminars. In 2006, Mountain Meitheal organised a Wicklow Mountains Leave No Trace Awareness Day, "manning" over ten car parks and access points and distributing over 1500 Leave No Trace leaflets to visitors. It also produced over 20 "all weather" Leave No Trace banners which were fixed to forest entrances across the mountains (with the landowners permission) and which have been a valuable reminder to recreational users to Leave No Trace for over 18 months. Mountain Meitheal's members include three Master Educators, five Trainers and at least a quarter of its membership have attended awareness days, some run by club members specifically for the club.



Helping spread the message

...the Irish Girl Guides

To help spread the message of Leave No Trace, the Irish Girl Guides not only included an article on Leave No Trace within its October Leaders' magazine, but also sent out with each magazine a copy of the Leave No Trace booklet. They have also changed the syllabus in their Brownie programme (for girls 7 - 10 years of age) from "understand the importance of the Country Code" to "understand the Leave No Trace message".

...the Duke of Edinburgh Award

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is planning an expedition conference on Sat 9th February, 2008, in Ardnabannon Outdoor Education Centre, Castlewellan. A number of workshops will be offered including an Awareness Session on Leave No Trace. The Award is a proactive supporter of Leave No Trace and will be encouraging all groups and participants to adopt the Leave No Trace principles especially for expeditions.

Wet weather?

Suggestions on how we can minimise our impact.

The recent bad weather is a timely reminder for us to re-examine our impact on tracks and trails.

The Leave No Trace principles can help us to avoid adding to an already deteriorating situation.

Realizing our own impact is half the battle!

Take the weather conditions into consideration when planning a trip. Once on the journey, the following recommendations will help to reduce impact:

ON EXISTING TRAILS:

- Wear appropriate footwear • Wear gaiters • Walk in the centre of tracks – even if muddy
- Avoid widening tracks • When on an eroded section of track - walk in single file
- Protect the vegetation at the side of tracks • Avoid secondary tracks (bootleg tracks or braids)
- Use the most durable surface available.

ON PRISTINE TERRAIN:

- Spread out so as not to form new tracks • Be aware of fragile surfaces • Limit the group size
- Be aware of damage to vegetation • Avoid places where impact may be just beginning.

By following these simple suggestions we can take the pressure off damaged tracks and avoid creating new ones. Currently, our boggy upland areas are in a fragile state. By recreational users checking their own behaviour and changing their habits, unnecessary damage can be reduced.



New Staff

Beverley Pierson, Project Officer

From the beginning of September, Leave No Trace Ireland has been based at the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN) in Belfast. Beverley who currently works as CAAN's Marketing Executive will co-ordinate, manage and promote Leave No Trace on a daily basis whilst still retaining responsibility for some of CAAN's marketing activities. Beverley's immediate priority will be to build a strong brand for the Leave No Trace message, produce Irish versions of the existing American Leave No Trace training aids, develop a training calendar to ensure the Leave No Trace message is being rolled out across the whole of Ireland and to secure partnerships within Leave No Trace Ireland.

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At present Leave No Trace Ireland is funded and supported by the organisations listed below. Leave No Trace relies heavily on the support it receives from its partnerships with other organisations. This ensures the project is kept sustainable and continues to carry out its important activities including its training and spreading the message. Without this help, Leave No Trace would struggle to exist in Ireland. If you would like more information on how to become a partner of Leave No Trace Ireland and the range of benefits that different levels of partnership bring, please contact Beverley at beverley@leavenotraceireland.org

Main Financial Partners of Leave No Trace Ireland



Funded by the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food under the National Development Plan 2000-2006.



An Roinn Gnídhaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta
Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs



Other Financial Partners of Leave No Trace Ireland

An Taisce • CAAN (NI) • Mountaineering Council of Ireland • Mountain Meitheal • Sport Northern Ireland • Wicklow Upland Council • X-treme North West

Supporters of Leave No Trace Ireland

Duke of Edinburgh Award • Scouting Ireland • Irish Uplands Forum • Mountain Biking Ireland • Irish Girl Guides • ENFO

Photographs courtesy of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Robert Jackson and Shay Walsh.