

THE GORGEOUS GORGE GAME

FRONTCOUNTRY GAME

Objective

In this lesson you will learn how to prepare for trips to area parks and how to minimize your impact on those parks.

Materials Needed

- Gorgeous Gorge Frontcountry information for each student or group
- Game boards (11" x 17"), one for each group of four students
- The Gorgeous Gorge Game cards (one set for each game board)
- 1 die for each game board
- Instructions

Background Information

Leave No Trace is a plan that helps people to be more concerned about their environment and to help them protect it for future generations. Leave No Trace applies in a backyard or local park (frontcountry) as much as it does in the wilderness (backcountry).

What is Leave No Trace? The best description comes from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, an educational, non-profit organization dedicated to the responsible enjoyment and active stewardship of the outdoors by all people, worldwide:

“In an effort to address the explosive use of America’s ‘front-country’ or day-use areas, Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics has expanded its educational focus to include these sites. The Leave No Trace Frontcountry Program has been developed in cooperation with land managers has experienced significant growth over the past few years.

Various demographic, geographic and behavioral factors have been taken into consideration during the development of the Frontcountry education program. According to the Outdoor Industry Association there are three times as many car campers and five times as many day hikers as there are backpackers in the U.S. The number of day hikers is projected to increase from 47 million people to 74 million people by 2050, and car campers are expected to increase from 42 million to 62 million by 2050. Various market trends were also considered in targeting day hikers and car campers. For example, according to a USDA Forest Service study day hiker days are projected to surpass the one billion days mark by 2020.”¹

¹ “Leave No Trace Frontcountry.” 2008. Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. 7 Dec. 2008 <<http://www.lnt.org/programs/frontcountry.php>>.

Procedure

1. Get Students Thinking About Parks:

Start the lesson by asking students about their visits to local parks. Do they visit any parks? Do they have favorites? What do they like to do when they go to a park? You might ask if they’ve ever heard the terms “backcountry” and “frontcountry.” You might define these for students so you start to build on a common language for the remainder of the module. The backcountry refers to areas inaccessible by car and where backpackers bring everything they’ll need for a few days or a few weeks — including food, emergency supplies, tent, sleeping bag and such. The front country, as described above, refers to areas where people day hike or where they are able to drive and offload tents and food and such.

2. Hit the Highlights of the Leave No Trace Frontcountry Ethic:

- You will want to ask students for their understanding of what “ethic” means.
- The game will provide opportunities for students to discuss/ debate the bulleted points, but you might want to discuss the seven main categories. See accompanying sheet.

3. Directions to Play the The Gorgeous Gorge Game:

- Divide the class into groups of four and hand out board games, sets of cards and dice.
- Cut cards apart and shuffle them. Place them on the board face down in the designated spot.
- Cut out and assemble playing pieces. Each player chooses a piece.
- Turns move clockwise.
- Roll die and move playing piece that number of spaces.
- On designated spaces, pick card and answer question. When your group reaches a consensus, or agreement, on an answer, then the person to the right gets to roll the die and pick up the next card.
- If you land on the social trail, you have to slide back, pick card and answer question. Then have the next person roll the die and hope that you don’t land on it again!
- When everyone has completed the game, move on to the assessment.

4. Assessment:

When students have completed the game, ask them to list three ways in which humans can minimize their collective impact on the Potomac Gorge.

THE GORGEOUS GORGE GAME

OUTDOOR ETHICS FOR FRONTCOUNTRY

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Be prepared! Remember food and water, and clothes to protect you from cold, heat and rain.
- Use maps to plan where you're going. Check them along the way so you'll stay on course and won't get lost.
- Remember to bring a leash for your pet and plastic bags to pick up your pet's waste.
- Learn about the areas you plan to visit. Read books, check online and talk to people before you go. The more you know, the more fun you'll have.

STICK TO TRAILS AND CAMP OVERNIGHT RIGHT

- Walk and ride on designated trails to protect trailside plants.
- Do not step on flowers or small trees. Once damaged, they may not grow back.
- Respect private property by staying on designated trails.
- Camp only on existing or designated campsites to avoid damaging vegetation.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Don't dig trenches or build structures in your campsite.

TRASH YOUR TRASH AND PICK UP POOP

- Pack it in, Pack it out. Put litter— even crumbs, peels and cores—in garbage bags and carry it home.
- Use bathrooms or outhouses when available. If not available, bury human waste in a small hole 6-8 inches deep and 200 feet or 70 big steps from water.
- Use a plastic bag to pack out your pet's poop to a garbage can.
- Keep water clean. Do not put soap, food, or human or pet waste in lakes or streams.

LEAVE IT AS YOU FIND IT

- Leave plants, rocks and historical items as you find them so others can enjoy them.
- Treat living plants with respect. Carving, hacking or peeling plants may kill them.

BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE

- Use a camp stove for cooking. Stoves are easier to cook on and create less impact than a fire.
- If you want to have a campfire, be sure it's permitted and safe to build a fire in the area you're visiting. Use only existing fire rings to protect the ground from heat. Keep your fire small.
- Remember, a campfire isn't a garbage can. Pack out all trash and food.
- Before gathering any firewood, check local regulations.
- Burn all wood to ash and be sure the fire is completely out and cold before you leave.

KEEP WILDLIFE WILD

- Observe wildlife from a distance and never approach, feed or follow them.
- Human food is unhealthy for all wildlife and feeding them starts bad habits.
- Protect wildlife and your food by securely storing your meals and trash.

SHARE OUR TRAILS AND MANAGE YOUR PET

- Be considerate when passing others on the trail.
- Keep your pet under control to protect it, other visitors and wildlife.
- Listen to nature. Avoid making loud noises or yelling. You will see more wildlife if you are quiet.
- Be sure the fun you have outdoors does not bother anyone else. Remember, other visitors are there to enjoy the outdoors too.



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