



SO YOU WANT TO . . . leave no traces

What it is: A new outdoor ethics programme to educate people who use the countryside for leisure pursuits how to minimise their impact on the environment.

What it isn't: A course in how to commit a crime and bamboozle the CSI team.

What it entails: The first recognised national Irish country code, Leave No Trace Ireland is an umbrella organisation for a network of cross-border bodies whose aim is to ensure and maintain responsible recreational use of our wild places.

Unlike other country codes, such as those in place in Britain, Leave No Traces aims not just to inform but also to educate users of the outdoors in the skills needed to maintain the natural environment.

Personal responsibility is at the heart of Leave No Trace, which pivots on seven key principles, as follows:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Be considerate of others
3. Respect farm animals and

wildlife

4. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
5. Leave behind what you

find

6. Dispose of waste properly
7. Minimise the effects of fire

The principles cover use of mountains, forests, pastureland, lakes, rivers and seashores. The code is endorsed by the Countryside Access and Activities Network and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme in the north.

In the south, members include Coillte, the Forest Service, the Heritage Council, Mountain Biking Ireland, Mountain Meitheal, the Mountaineering Council of Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Scouting Ireland.

The organisers are hoping for more members to adopt the scheme, which is part of the

government's National Countryside Recreation Strategy.

What they say: "All recreational users must strive to leave no trace, so that future generations can continue to enjoy the country we live in, which is beginning to show

sings of the increasing pressure from recreational use." – Bill Murphy, chairman of Leave No Trace Ireland.

"The person who goes with reverent feet through the hills and valleys, accompanied by neither noise nor dust to scare away wild creatures, stopping often, watching closely, listening carefully. Only thus can they, at length, feel at one with what is, after all, their natural environment." – Robert Lloyd Praeger, 1937.

The lingo: 'Ethic' – knowing what the right thing to do is, and doing it, even if there is no one about to see you do it.

'Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but memories' – the hillwalker's mantra.

Who to contact: Leave No Trace Ireland at www.LNT.org; www.pathsa.org; www.scouts.ie

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