

69. WILDERNESS PLEDGE

Scouts, next week we're going to practice some of the skills of what is called minimum impact camping, when we're outdoors for our Park Service project. As you've ;earned this month, the idea of minimum impact camping is to leave no trace that we were ever there when we leave a campsite or hike a trail.

As part of our opening ceremony tonight we heard a reading of the Outdoor Code. You should be familiar with that because we recite it every once in a while and it's in your Scout handbook. Now we're going to read and think about a code that goes a step further. It's called the Wilderness Pledge.

The Wilderness Pledge says: "Through good camping and hiking practices, I pledge myself to preserve the beauty and splendor of America's wilderness, primitive, and backcountry areas. I commit myself to: 'Set a personal example in following the Outdoor Code; train those I lead in the skills and attitudes needed to protect and preserve wilderness for future generations; and assure that parties of which I am a part observe the hiking and camping standards that will 'leave no trace' of our passing. " That pledge is particularly important when you go into really wild areas of our beautiful country. You are promising that you will everything in your power to preserve its beauty for all who follow you.

Now I would like to join me as we borrow the first phrase of the Scout Oath to commit ourselves to the Wilderness Pledge, Please repeat after me: "On my honor I will do my best," (Scouts' repeat)