

27. THE WILDERNESS PLEDGE

Next week we'll be outdoors again, and it's good to remind ourselves that Scouts obey the Wilderness Pledge whenever they are hiking, camping, or on other activities away from the meeting place. You should be familiar with the Wilderness Pledge. It says, "Through good camping and hiking practices, I pledge myself to preserve the beauty and splendor of Americas' 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.

Assure that parties of which I am a part observe the camping and hiking standards that will leave no trace of our passing. "

It seems to me that what it boils down to is that in the Wilderness Pledge we commit ourselves as Scouts not only to preserve the environment but to make

it better. For example, not only don't we leave litter ourselves, we pick up other peoples litter. And we not only build safe fires, we try to make sure that others do, too. In other words we take responsibility as Scouts to do whatever we can to keep America beautiful.

That may seem like a tall order. Nobody enjoys picking up other peoples litter. It's a lot easier to just say, "Boy, what a mess!" and pass it by. But that's not the Scouting way.

On all our hikes and campouts, let's leave the land better than we found it. That's Scouting's way.