

Like We Were Never There

How Leave No Trace Works as an Individual and Institutional Environmental Solution

This thesis examines the history of wilderness and wilderness management in the U.S. The Leave No Trace principles are analyzed as an individualized environmental action plan and as a visitor management tool for the Federal land management agencies: the Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management.

Principles of Leave No Trace

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impacts
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of other visitors

1900s: Conservation and preservation movements are born

1916: National Park Service created

1940: Fish and Wildlife Service created

1956: Sen. Hubert Humphrey of MN drafts first wilderness bill based on Zahniser's ideas

1983: National Wilderness Management Workshop in Idaho suggests need for interagency land management ethic

1991: MOU signed between NOLS and the Forest Service

1905: Forest Service created

1920s: First "primitive areas" protected as wilderness by the Forest Service

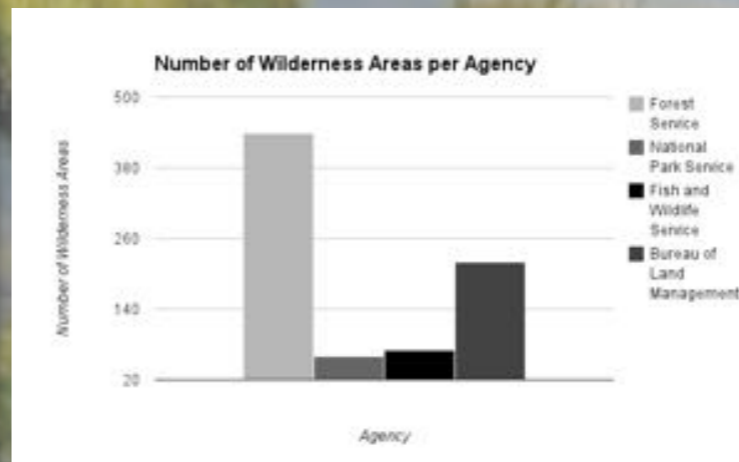
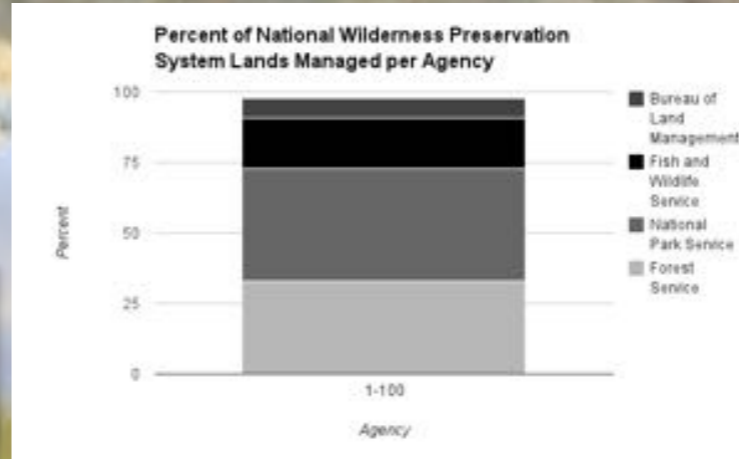
1946: Bureau of Land Management created

1976: Federal Land Policy and Management Act; BLM brought into NWPS

1994: New MOU signed between FS, NPS, FWS, BLM, and LNT, Inc; LNT becomes official federal recreation ethic

Methodology

1. Historical analysis of land management agencies
2. Survey of federal wilderness managers
3. Website analysis



Discussion

The historical analysis and the data reveal that LNT is firmly engrained within the agencies. Though LNT was originally designed for the individual, it can and is readily appropriated to larger institutions, such as the land management agencies.

The agencies promote LNT because it is a cheap way to maintain wilderness areas and it allows for a larger clientele. Leave No Trace is a philosophy that promotes the absence of people in pristine areas, but in reality ensures that people are outside, enjoying and preserving wilderness areas for decades to come!

Results

Historical Analysis:

- Each agency has approached wilderness designation and protection in a way that is unique to the history and political agenda of that agency
- The growing popularity of wilderness areas forced land managers to create new visitor management tools
- Leave No Trace can be easily appropriated to each agency

Survey:

- 62% participation rate
- Every respondent had prior knowledge of LNT and just under 50% were certified in LNT
- 94% of respondents promoted LNT in their wilderness areas

Website Analysis:

- 88% of websites mentioned Leave No Trace at least once
- LNT mentioned in a variety of pages and usually linked to www.lnt.org