CHECKLIST

Creating your own checklist for sustainable course management.

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Learning experience

Topic

Guiding, planning and preparing ahead

1 hour

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants

- know what issues need to be taken into account, prepared and communicated to course participants to ensure sustainable course management
- have an increased awareness of the topics and issues that may arise when organising and facilitating a course
- are able to prepare and plan a trip in a sustainable way

Suitable for
outdoor sport instructors

(Practical sessions)
Theoretical lessons

Outdoor F2F
Indoor F2F
Digital

Materials needed

Example list provided below

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Activity instruction

The purpose of this activity is to create your own checklist according to the requirements of your courses, the area and special issues of the sport to take into account. You can either do this alone or together with your course participants.

Good planning then starts with choosing the right destination that is also reachable by public transport, mobility options for the last mile, research on protected zones and endangered flora and fauna as well as pack lists for participants that include equipment to avoid single use packaging (for example refillable water bottles and lunch boxes).

An example checklist is provided below.

Reflection and discussion

Even if you prepare the checklist in advance, you should facilitate a reflection and discussion around the list.

- Are all relevant topics included?
- Does the checklist link to the most important impacts of our sport? (see activities on impact analysis as preparation)
- What and when do we need to communicate to participants?

Key words

#course management
#planning and preparing ahead
#checklist

Source

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Materials

Example checklist from Leave no Trace Ireland

The 7 Principles of Leave No Trace are an easily understood framework of minimum impact practices for anyone visiting the outdoors. Those principles are:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Be Considerate of Others
3. Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife
4. Travel and Camp on Durable Ground
5. Leave What You Find
6. Dispose of Waste Properly
7. Minimise the Effects of Fire

Plan Ahead and Prepare.

"Prior planning prevents poor performance." (James Baker)

Good planning and preparation can help accomplish goals safely while minimising impact to the environment and having fun along the way!

Plan Ahead and Prepare		
Action	**Description**	**Done (Yes/No)**
Be Informed	• Gather local information from tourism offices and/or local landowners and agencies. You may need prior permission for access points or parking. Having advance knowledge of these issues can save last minute stress in busy areas. • Consider your transportation route to get to your destination, small points like stopping at public toilets prior to arriving at a beauty spot can make a more pleasurable trip for you and your group. • A local weather forecast will help you plan gear and equipment. Let others know your intended route and when you expect to return. Always bring a first aid kit and know how to use it.	
Educate Yourself by Asking Locally	• Know the regulations and special concerns for any area that you visit, environmental concerns may vary from one place to another. Respect all closures and signage. • Protected areas may be off-limits to mechanised modes of travel or certain types of activities may require permits. It's your	

CHECKLIST

	responsibility to know if you are on private land and obtain permission first. • Organisers of outdoor events have extra responsibilities. Look realistically at the capacity of the local facilities and consider the impacts your event may have on the local environment. • Is there adequate car parking for your participants without blocking access routes? The emergency services, land managers and local residents will need access at all times. • Consult with the relevant authorities to establish environmental and social concerns for the area and seek their support. Be prepared to revise or adapt aspects of the event.	
Plan for Your Group	• The area in which you choose to travel should reflect the skill level and objectives of your group. • People may expect some noise and commotion around picnic areas and developed recreation sites. However, in natural/cultural heritage areas visitors want to experience the surroundings without these distractions.	
Group Size	• Group sizes vary whether people are hiking with friends, family or organised groups. Large groups can make others feel a sense of crowding and have a disproportionate impact on the experience of the people they encounter. • Researchers have found that most users, given the choice, preferred meeting ten groups of two to one group of twenty. • If you are planning an overnight trip for a large group, try to include enough experienced leaders so the group can be divided into smaller groups and, if possible, camp separately. • Larger groups are best accommodated in areas where there are already developed trails and campsites	
Avoid Times of High Use	• Peak periods, such as holidays, weekends or good weather spells mean popular spots are often fraught with traffic, crowding, delays and conflicts with other groups. • Try to visit at other times, such as midweek, for a more enjoyable experience or explore out-of-the way places.	
Use Appropriate Equipment	• Prepare your kit list for poor weather, hazards and emergencies. • If you are heading to the hills, remember that temperatures decrease as you gain height. Many mountain ranges have their own micro-climates, often with poor visibility, whilst areas at sea level can be perfectly clear.	
Plan Your Meals	• Poor meal planning can profoundly affect a group's impact on a sensitive environment. Adequate food is essential to the success of a trip. However, bringing too much can be a mistake.	

	• Reduce waste (leftovers) and litter. • Reduce rucksack weight, resulting in faster hiking times and less fatigue. • Reduce dependence upon campfires for cooking.	
Develop the Skills	• Know the skills and equipment needed for your chosen activity. • As a competent navigator, you can enjoy a new skill in the outdoors and reduce the risks of danger to yourself and your group. • Getting lost has important implications for you, the people who attempt to find you and the landscape. • Make sure that first aid and navigation skills are part of your training before visiting remote areas and be sure you're in adequate physical shape for the trip.	

Be Considerate of Others

"To develop a complete mind: study the art of science, study the science of art. Learn how to see. Realise that everything connects to everything." - Leonardo da Vinci

Be Considerate of Others		
Action	Description	Done (Yes/No)
Respect Your Hosts	• Rural landowners have a long tradition of providing reasonable access for people to enjoy countryside pursuits such as hillwalking, fishing, shooting, kayaking, rock climbing, hunting, picnicking and other recreational uses. • Most landowners do not object to recreational users crossing their land but appreciate being asked.	
Car Parking	• Park safely and considerately with particular regard to allowing access to gateways or entry to property. • Conservation rangers and land managers may work at weekends and need access for machinery. • Emergency services may need a wide space to pass or turn into a gateway.	
When Crossing Farmland	• Follow biosecurity codes/notices when in place and always keep a safe distance from any works. • Try to avoid all livestock; both to avoid endangering you or your group, and/or the distress it can cause to the animals.	

CHECKLIST

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	• Leave gates as you find them (open or shut) and use stiles whenever possible. If you need to climb over a gate, minimise the strain on it by climbing at the hinge end, one at a time. • Be careful not to disturb the equipment of farmers, anglers, foresters, beekeepers and others who derive their income from the land.	
Respect Other Visitors	• Consider other visitors using the outdoors and respect the quality and enjoyment of their experience. • Some people visit the countryside to enjoy peace and solitude, others come for camaraderie. • If camping, whenever possible, find an established site out of sight and sound of other visitors.	
Yield to Others	• Simple courtesies such as offering a friendly greeting, stepping aside to let someone pass, waiting patiently for a turn, or preserving the quiet all make a difference. • Horses are spooked easily, so stay motionless and talk quietly to the riders as they pass. • When passing others on a bike, politely announce your presence and proceed with caution.	
Let Nature Prevail	• Avoid the use of bright lights, mobile phones, radios, electronic games and other intrusive urban devices. • Try, as much as possible, to keep noise down, especially at night or in remote places so as not to disturb other campers as well as nocturnal wildlife who will know of your presence long before you see them. Most of all, tune in to the sounds of nature. • Drones are now a regular sight and sound at popular beauty spots. For some people, they can be intrusive and distracting and others consider them an invasion of privacy. • Before using a drone, make sure you are not compromising others and ensure you have permission to film. In protected areas such as National Parks, you will need a permit.	

CHECKLIST

Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife

"Wild animals, like wild places, are invaluable to us precisely because they are not us." Robert Mac Farlane - The Wild Places

Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife		
Action	**Description**	**Done (Yes/No)**
Avoid Sensitive Times and Habitats	• Consider the seasonal stresses that wildlife face and avoid sensitive breeding times and habitats. • Marine animals are very vulnerable to human disturbances. Disturbances to breeding seal populations may cause them to abandon their efforts. • Mussels, barnacles, urchins and starfish can easily be destroyed by a single footstep.	
Never Feed Wildlife or Farmstock	• Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviours and exposes them to predators and other dangers. • Their reliance on human food is a detriment to their own well-being and this becomes harmful to wildlife as they stop foraging for the nutritious diet ordinarily derived from their natural environment. • Serious illness or death can occur when wildlife or livestock consume foil food wrappers, plastics and other "inedible bits."	
Store Food and Rubbish Securely	• "Food" includes rubbish, canned food, stock feed, pet food, fuel and scented or flavoured toiletries. The salt in hiking boots, backpacks or clothing also attracts many small mammals. • Leave a clean camp site by removing all rubbish and even the tiniest food scraps. • Wildlife are adept opportunists and the temptation of an untidy camper's kitchen or a well-meaning handout, can overcome their natural wariness of humans. • Aggressive or destructive behaviour may follow, and in conflicts with humans, animals ultimately lose. • Prospects of an easy meal also lure wildlife into hazardous locales such as campsites, picnic sites, car parks, and roads where they can be chased by dogs or hit by vehicles. • They may also congregate in unnatural numbers, increasing stress and the spread of disease within their populations.	

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Travel and Camp on Durable Ground

Pristine areas are those that see little human traffic. They are places where there are few, if any trails and no established campsites. They feel truly wild. To prevent the spread of tracks and campsites and protect the wildness we seek in pristine areas, it is especially important to practice Leave No Trace techniques.

Travel and Camp on Durable Ground		
Action	Description	Done (Yes/No)
Stay on Designated Trails	• On tracks, walk single file in the centre of the track. • Wearing appropriate footwear and gaiters allows you to continue even where it is wet, rocky or muddy. • Tracks become progressively wider and form parallel paths where people walk on trail margins or detour around obstacles. • Shortcutting a trail has severe consequences.	
Choose Durable Launch Sites on Water Ways	Boating, fishing and other water-based activities can damage shorelines, offshore reefs and wetlands. • Always choose durable sites to launch, anchor and dock your boat. • Avoid tide pools, coral reefs, and sites rich in wildlife. • Lifting your boat rather than dragging it will save impacting any surface.	
Disperse Use in Pristine Areas	• In general, spread out when walking across vegetation. • If each person takes a slightly different route, a distinct track is less likely to form because no single plant receives multiple footfalls. • Walking single file is acceptable where there is little chance of trampling plants.	
Route Choice	• Avoid fragile vegetation such as broad-leaf flowering plants, tree seedlings, woody stemmed plants, mosses and lichens. • Try to choose a route with a durable surface by walking on rocks, bare ground or skirting around fragile places.	

CHECKLIST

Leave What You Find

"The earth, like the sun, like the air, belongs to everyone—and to no one." - Edward Abbey

Leave What You Find		
Action	**Example**	**Done (Yes/No)**
Conserve the Past	Archaeological and historical artefacts such as old walls, ring forts, holy wells, old mine workings and hilltop cairns are reminders of the rich human history and belong to all people for all time. • In rocky places, it can be tempting to recreate cairns with the abundance of stones or write out your names in stones on the ground. This is a form of graffiti, and in busy areas, it can become a habit replicated by other visitors. • Understanding the sensitivity of maintaining heritage is an important part of the principle of "Leave What You Find".	
Leave Natural Objects Undisturbed	• Picking a few wildflowers does not seem like it would have any great impact. If only a few flowers were picked, it wouldn't. • So, fill your camera with memories, instead of filling your packs with souvenirs. Let sketches, and drawings capture the scenes you've enjoyed and resist the urge to physically remove objects. • On group outings, you can help people investigate the role of natural objects in their own environments.	
Spreading Invasive Species	Non-native (introduced) species of plants, animals and organisms can cause large scale, irreversible changes to ecosystems by invading and eliminating native species over time. Sadly, the spread is largely due to recreational visitors. The best solution is prevention. We can help prevent the spread of invasive species by following a few practical suggestions: • Do not transport flowers, weeds, or aquatic plants into natural habitats. Empty and clean your packs, tents, boats, fishing equipment, vehicles and other gear after every trip. • Water, mud and soil may contain harmful seeds, spores, or tiny plants and animals. • Clean the dirt out of your boots and tyre treads. • Never discard or release live bait.	

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Dispose of Waste Properly

"The notion that outdoor recreation has no environmental impacts is no longer tenable." - Curtis H. Flather and H. Ken Cordell

Dispose of Waste Properly		
Action	**Example**	**Done (Yes/No)**
Litter and Food Waste	• "Leave No Waste" by reducing your litter at the source. Think "Pack it in, Pack it Out" • Inspect your rest areas and campsite for rubbish or spilt foods. • Remove all rubbish and kitchen waste, including leftover food ("micro-garbage"), cigarette butts, chewing gum, and organic litter such as tea bags, orange peel, banana skin, apple core or egg and nut shells. • Planning meals in advance can prevent messy, smelly rubbish after picnics or camps. Keeping your menu simple on short trips may mean you don't need to carry a stove. • Never use a campfire or barbecue to dispose of waste; rubbish that is half-burned or buried will attract animals and make a site unattractive to other visitors. • Pack biodegradable bags to carry your rubbish out (and maybe someone else's). Litter is not only ugly, but it can also be deadly for wildlife. Plastic can rings and bags kill shorebirds, turtles and other marine mammals. Fishing lines and nets can ensnare or injure wildlife, so be careful not to leave any behind.	
Good Sanitation Practice	Human Waste: "Where's the toilet?" • It is an important question, especially in the outdoors. • In the case of day trips, often the need for a toilet visit can be managed by doing some advanced research on the area. • Proper disposal of human waste is perhaps the most significant impact we can have on the outdoors. Where there are no public toilets, answering the call involves a little pre-planning, some initiative, and creativity. The four objectives of proper human waste disposal are: 1. Avoid polluting water sources. 2. Minimise contact with insects and animals. 3. Maximise decomposition. 4. Minimise the chances of social impacts.	

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	• Cat Holes: In remote places where no facilities are available, cat holes are the most widely accepted method of human waste disposal.	
Dishwashing	• Use a clean pot or expanding jug to collect water and take it to a wash site at least 30 metres away from water sources. • Use hot water, elbow grease and little or no soap. Strain dirty dishwater into a fine mesh strainer before scattering it broadly and away from freshwater bodies. • Do this well away from camp. • Pack out the contents of the filter in a plastic bag along with any uneaten leftovers.	
Bathing	• Even when it's 'biodegradable', soap can affect the water quality of lakes and streams, so minimise its use. • Always wash yourself 30 metres or more from shorelines and rinse with water carried in a pot or jug. This allows the soil to act as a filter. • Hand sanitisers that don't require rinsing will enable you to wash your hands without worrying about soapy wastewater disposal.	
Toothpaste	• Brushing with water alone has the most negligible impact of all. • However, if toothpaste is a difficult habit to give up, then try to use as little as possible and disperse using the "atomising" method. (Blow as much air and water as possible, along with the toothpaste, through the smallest opening of your mouth to spray tiny particles over a broad area.) • Near the sea, toothpaste can be spat below the high tide line.	

CHECKLIST

Minimise the Effects of Fire

However, fires can cause lasting impacts and devastate forests, natural habitats, wildlife and property. Many of these fires are either carelessly or accidentally started by uninformed campers and day-trippers.

Minimise the Effects of Fire		
Action	Example	Done (Yes/No)
Check Local Regulations	It may be prohibited to build a campfire in some areas. National Parks, protected areas, and forestry plantations may have complete fire bans. • Before you make the trip, check with local landowners whether building a campfire is permitted.	
Use a Stove	The safest way to be prepared for all situations is to use a stove. Stoves are always preferred over campfires because they leave no impact and can be used in different environments.	
Considerations Before Building a Camp Fire	• Do you need a fire at your picnic or campsite? • Consider alternatives such as a stove or lanterns to create an atmosphere. If a campfire is important to you: • First ask yourself if the wood you are using comes from a sustainable yield? • Be knowledgeable about pertinent regulations and campfire management techniques. • Judge the wind, weather, location and proximity to forestry, gorse or dry heather and decide whether it's safe and responsible to build a campfire. • In places where there are no fire rings or grates, bring a fire pan or set aside time to build a mound fire. • Have a trowel or small shovel and a container for saturating the ashes with water.	
The Five "Dos" of Wood Collection	To ensure your fire only uses sustainable wood sources, use the five D check list below: • Downed: Don't snap branches off trees, either living or dead, because this scars them. Use only sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand. • Dinky : Smaller fires will have less impact. Restrict the size of wood selected, ranging from twigs the size of your little finger to no thicker than your wrist. Length should be from your wrist to your elbow. Larger pieces of downed wood play an important and	

	unique role in nutrient recycling, water cycling and soil productivity. They provide shelter for wildlife and while decaying and germination sites for many plant species. • Dead: Never saw or hack a branch from a living tree. Only use deadwood available at ground level. • Distanced: In remote areas, gather firewood on the way to your camp so that there is less impact on a particular site and the area around your site retains a natural appearance. • Distributed: Smaller fires will completely burn to ash which makes the clean-up easier. Collect the ash remains and distribute over a wider area, returning your site to its previous condition	
Manage your Campfire	No matter which campfire technique you employ: • Never leave a fire unattended. • Ensure children are well supervised. • Keep wood and fuel sources well away from your fire. • Follow manufacturer's product and safety instructions on stoves. • Ensure fires are well away from tents and tarpaulins. • Don't try to burn foil-lined packets, leftover food, or other rubbish that would have to be removed later. • Collect only the wood that you will need to burn; by gathering too much you may create a bigger fire than required. • Burn the wood completely to ash: Stop feeding the fire and give yourself an hour or more to add all the unburned stick ends. • Saturate the ash with water and stir the remains to make sure all the ash is exposed to water. Make sure it's cool to the touch and remove any rubbish. • Scatter all the ashes widely with a small shovel or pot lid. • Restore the appearance of the fire site.	