

WILDERNESS USE POLICY

The Boy Scouts of America recognize the Adirondack Park of New York State as a unique area of our country. The unequalled combination of lakes, rivers and mountains make it a special natural resource area to be enjoyed by many, but requiring special thoughtfulness and consideration in using the area for the variety of outdoor experiences which it can provide. The Adirondack Park contains the only designated wilderness areas east of the Mississippi River, which has given special recognition to its unique character. The New York State Constitution guarantees that the State-owned Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park be kept "Forever Wild". Private land holdings which constitute about sixty percent of the park are managed in varying ways and special care must be taken to observe the conditions which these owners place on allowing access by Boy Scouts and Venturers to their lands.

The Adirondacks contain many fragile ecosystems particularly along its shorelines and on its mountaintops. Since the region lies within a few hours drive from the eastern megalopolis; the Adirondacks are accessible to millions of people making it imperative that everyone using the Adirondacks adhere to a comprehensive wilderness ethic.

Massawepie Scout Camps adheres to the Boy Scouts of America OUTDOOR CODE - As an American, I will do my best to...

BE CLEAN IN MY OUTDOOR MANNERS - I will treat the outdoors as a heritage to be improved for our greater enjoyment. I will keep my trash and garbage out of America's waters, fields, woods and roadways.

BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE - I will prevent wildfire. I will build my fire in a safe place and be sure it is out before I leave.

BE CONSIDERATE IN THE OUTDOORS - I will treat public and private property with respect. I will remember the use of the outdoors is a privilege I can lose by abuse.

BE CONSERVATION MINDED - I will learn how to practice good conservation of soil, water, forests, minerals, energy, grasslands and wildlife, and I will urge others to do the same. I will use sportsmanlike methods in all my outdoor activities.

The term wilderness area applies to all State or privately owned lands within the Adirondack Park. The Outdoor Code of the BSA and Scout Camps applies to outdoor behavior generally, but Scout and Venture groups embarking on treks into the Adirondack Mountains must employ minimum impact camping methods. It is important that people observing Scouting groups come away with the impression that Scouts and Venturers know good camping practices and employ them on their outings.

Within the Outdoor Program of the BSA, there are many different skill levels. Camping practices that may be appropriate for day trips or long-term camping at organized Scout camps may not be appropriate for wilderness areas. Scouts and Venturers need to learn proper wilderness camping practices and adopt attitudes and patterns of behavior that demonstrate a respect for the rights of others, including future generations, to enjoy the outdoors.

The Massawepie Scout Camps insist on employment of the following practices for all units planning an Adirondack Trek:

1. Always obtain a BSA Tour Permit at your council Service Center, meet all conditions specified and carry it on the trip.
2. The size of groups should be limited to not more than 12, and in some instances 8 total people; this would include your guide and at least one adult.
3. Make sure that the group leader is familiar with the DEC requirements such as restrictions on camping close to trails or water bodies, prohibitions on camping above 4,000 feet and the necessity of camping at designated sites in certain wilderness areas.
4. Match the ruggedness of high adventure experiences to the skills, physical abilities and maturity of those taking part. Save more rugged treks for older youth members who are more proficient and experienced in outdoor skills.