MEANING OF THE OUTDOOR CODE

Whenever you are outdoors, use the Outdoor Code as your guide. It has four important points.

As an American, I Will Do My Best to:

- **Be clean in my outdoor manners.** I will treat the outdoors as a heritage. I will take care of it for myself and others. I will keep my trash and garbage out of lakes, streams, fields, woods, and roadways.

  A heritage is a gift given by one generation to those that follow. For thousands of years, the land of America has been the heritage of all people living on the continent. Today, that gift is yours. One day you will pass the land on to your children and to all future generations. Do everything you can now to take care of the land, both for your own enjoyment and for use by people hundreds of years from now.

- **Be careful with fire.** I will prevent wildfire. I will build my fires only where they are appropriate. When I have finished using a fire, I will make sure it is cold-out. I will leave a clean fire ring, or remove all evidence of my fire.

  In the right setting, an open fire is a wonderful part of an outdoor adventure. However, not every outdoor spot can withstand the impact of a campfire. Sometimes there is not enough firewood. Dry weather may create a danger of wildfire. The ashes and blackened stones left by open fires can spoil the beauty of an area.

  Build a campfire only if you are sure its impact on the land will be small. Use established fire rings whenever you can. Make your fire no larger than necessary. Watch a fire at all times to prevent sparks or flames from spreading into surrounding grass and trees. Where fires are not appropriate, cook your meals over backpacking stoves.

  What you do after you douse a fire is as important as getting it cold-out. Properly dispose of ashes. Follow low-impact methods to erase every sign of your fire.

- **Be considerate in the outdoors.** I will treat public and private property with respect. I will use low-impact methods of hiking and camping.

  Public lands belong to every one of us. You are one of millions of owners of all national parks and forests, state lands, and even a small city park near your home. Ownership carries with it a great responsibility to look after your possession.

  Begin by learning all you can about nature and the outdoors. The more you understand, the easier it will be for you to make wise choices. Leave no trace of your outdoor adventures. That may mean keeping your groups small, camping only in designated sites, and maintaining reasonable levels of noise. Respect the rights of others by doing nothing that would spoil their backcountry experiences.
- **Be conservation-minded.** *I will learn how to practice good conservation of soil, waters, forests, minerals, grasslands, wildlife, and energy. I will urge others to do the same.*

Throughout America, Scouts like you enjoy outdoor adventures. Many also take pride in rebuilding trails, repairing damaged meadows, and restoring eroded hillsides and shorelines. By volunteering to help forest and park managers, you can give something back to the land that has given so much to you.

Of course, you need not limit your efforts just to the backcountry. In cities and towns, along highways, and in farmlands, you will find many opportunities to protect the environment.

When it comes to conservation, the efforts of a single Scout are of great value. The combined energy of millions of Scouts across the nation is making a tremendous improvement in the quality of America's parks and forests. Many Scouts are being recognized for knowing how to use the land wisely and how to lend a helping hand for the environment. Strive to be one of them.