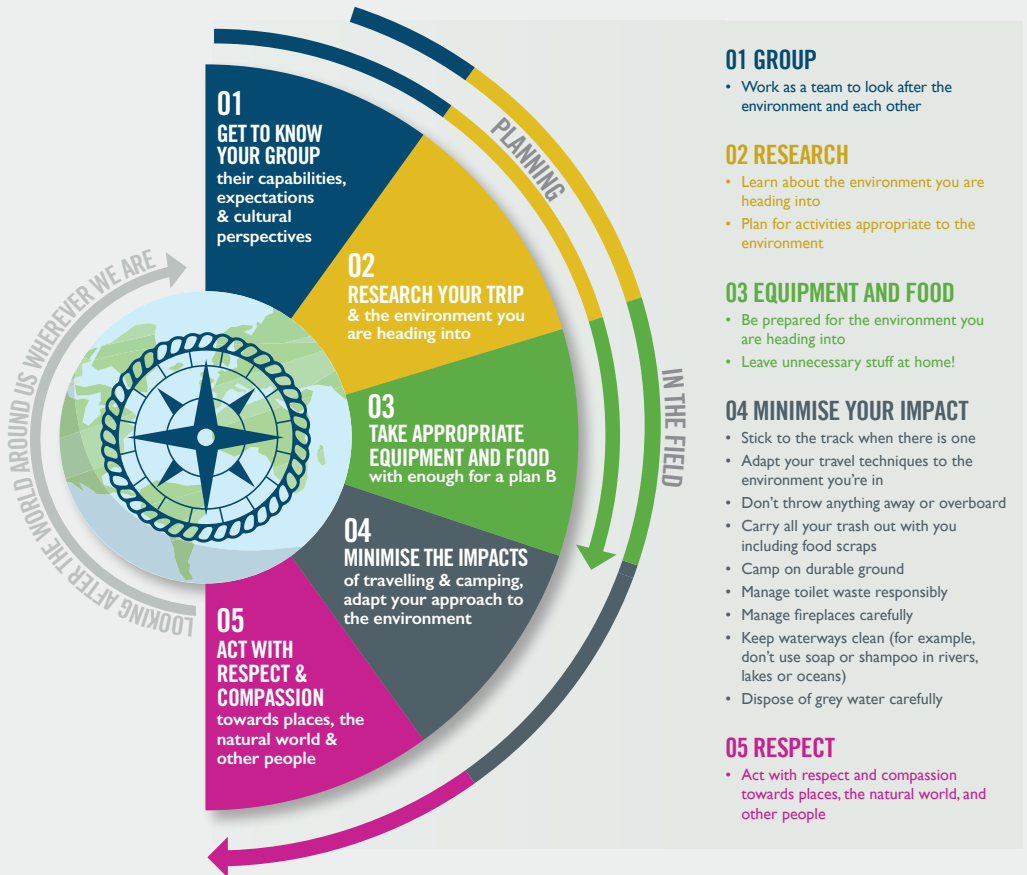




OUTWARD BOUND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER

NATURE BOUND A FIELD GUIDE FOR INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS

AIM: Develop ecological awareness and environmental stewardship among students and staff. Minimise our environmental impact and encourage respect and compassion towards places, the natural world and other people.

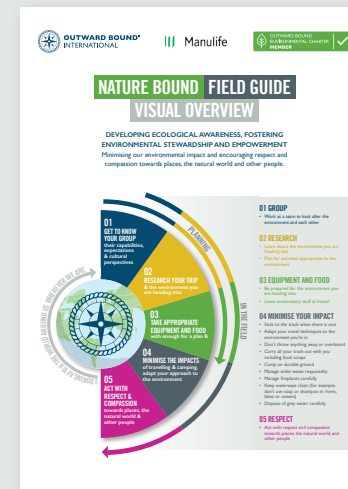


NOTES FOR INSTRUCTORS

This “Nature Bound” Field Guide offers guidelines to support sustainable practice for Outward Bound programs. It provides a simple approach to planning and practice that combines environmental considerations with basic risk management principles.

For the majority of OB Schools, staff may already be role modelling many of the principles and practices within this guide. In such cases, the intent is that this field guide provides some structure and validation to the work staff are already doing, along with some resources to support this work.

- This field guide aims to offer guidelines relevant to wilderness, outdoor and urban areas; including desert, forest, alpine, coastal and lake/ river environments.
- This field guide does not attempt to go into detail around environmental management practices specific to different geographical areas, environments or types of ecosystem. Rather it offers general principles which OB Schools can use as a foundation from which to apply the environmental expertise and current practices they have in relation to their own operating environments.
- There is considerable variety to course formats, locations and duration across the OB School network. Within some courses it will be quite achievable to progressively help students develop an understanding and take ownership of the guidelines within this field guide. On other courses this will not be realistic, or may not be a learning priority for the student group. In these instances OB staff can guide/ lead students in a way that is consistent with these guidelines.
- Regardless of course duration and format, a goal of this field guide is to support all students in developing ecological awareness, a sense of environmental stewardship, and understanding of how to behave in environmentally responsible ways (both at Outward Bound and in their own communities). To assist with this, a simplified poster with summary information of the 5 key guidelines is included alongside this field guide.



This poster could be placed on walls of OB buildings, taken into the field on laminated A4 paper, included within student notebooks or workbooks, etc.

- This Nature Bound Field Guide sits alongside and complements the Nature Bound Operations and Education guides. These 3 guides offer guidance to help OB Schools work towards fulfilling the OBI Environmental Charter, which aims to support excellence in environmental education and practice across the OBI School network. For more information on the Environmental Charter and the process through which OB Schools can fulfil the Charter criteria, please refer to the “Introduction to the Environmental Charter” document.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- Key concepts informing this guide are that people are part of nature and do have an impact on the environment around us. This is OK as long as the impact is within the limits of the environment to absorb it without negative effect to the overall functioning of local ecosystems.
- Different environments have different limits/ ability to absorb human impact.
- Our planning processes need to actively consider our need to be in a particular environment (particularly those with sensitive/ fragile ecosystems), and what techniques we should apply to manage and reduce our impact in the environments we do choose to be in.
- The idea of living within environmental limits is applicable across different environments/ ecosystems, and from a small to a large scale.

THE 5 GUIDELINES

Respect and compassion are key Outward Bound values. It's important to plan carefully to ensure we are minimizing our impact on the environment and acting with respect and compassion towards our team-mates, other people, the natural world, and different places. Following these 5 guidelines will help us to do this:

01 GET TO KNOW YOUR GROUP

- People who are pushed beyond their limits in the outdoors are more likely to disregard environmental considerations as they focus on getting through the situation in front of them.
- People from different cultures may have different ideas and perspectives around their relationship with the natural world, and what culturally appropriate behaviour might look like in different places/ situations.
- Because of this it's important to get to know your group, consider your collective capability in relation to your trip, learn about any differences in cultural perspectives or beliefs within your group, and develop a better understanding of each other's expectations and motivations before you decide on a plan.
- Doing this will help you to learn from each other, plan an appropriate trip, give some predictability to your environmental impact, and help to make the experience more enjoyable for everyone!
- What is the level of experience/ ability of your group members in relation to the type of environment you will be in, and in relation to the proposed activity?
- How is everyone feeling about the activity? What are peoples' goals, expectations and motivations?
- In relation to the natural world, what cultural perspectives or beliefs exist within your group?
- Are any of these perspectives or beliefs in conflict with each other, or in conflict with the guidelines within this field guide? What impact might this conflict have on the activity as planned?
- How might this conflict be resolved? For example, by modifying some aspect of the activity, carrying out the same activity in a different location, or choosing a completely different activity.
- What can you do to help each group member be as prepared as they can be?
- How can group members most effectively support each other during the trip/ activity?



02

RESEARCH YOUR TRIP (OR ACTIVITY) AND THE ENVIRONMENT YOU ARE HEADING INTO

- **What are our aims, or the learning objectives we are trying to achieve?**
 - What locations/ activities might help us to meet these aims?
- **What type of environments/ ecosystems are in these locations?**
 - What sorts of activities are sustainable within this environment?
 - Are there any types of activities that we should avoid in this environment?
 - Are there parts of this environment that are fragile/ protected?
 - Are there alternative locations that would meet our goals and objectives with less environmental impact?
 - What is the local and cultural history of the area that would be useful to share with participants?
- **What does our trip or activity involve?**
 - How far is this trip, how long might it take?
 - What sort of terrain will we be in?
 - What difficulties might this terrain present?
- **What is the weather forecast?**
 - Are there any specific considerations for this time of the year (eg heat and limited water in summer; cold and muddy/ snowy ground in winter)?
- **How can we minimize the impacts of travelling and camping (refer to guideline 4)?**
- **Are there any considerations around land access we need to think about (e.g. will we be crossing private land, or are there cultural considerations in relation to local indigenous peoples we should be aware of)?**
- **How do we get to the trip/ activity location? Are there active/ public transport options? If we have to drive, where do we park?**



03

TAKE ADEQUATE/ APPROPRIATE EQUIPMENT AND FOOD

- **Now that you have a good understanding of where you are going, the environmental conditions you might encounter, and what your team members capabilities and expectations are, it's time to focus on food and equipment:**
 - What food and equipment do we need, what is available?
 - How can the impact of this food and equipment be reduced? For example through careful food choice, removing excess packaging, packing food carefully, considering dish washing process and equipment
 - How will we reduce and manage food waste?
- Do we have adequate food and equipment to go ahead with our trip as planned?
- What are our contingency (alternative) plans for this trip? Do we have spare food/ equipment in case we need to go with one of these contingency plans? E.g. tents vs tarps, stoves vs fires, campsites vs buildings, etc



04

MINIMISE THE IMPACTS OF TRAVELLING AND CAMPING

- **What are the specific guidelines we need to follow to minimize the impact on the environment we are in?**

- This will be different for different environments, for example desert, forest, alpine, coastal, and lake/river ecosystems. Local expertise is really important here to help inform what best practice looks like.

- **Generalised guidelines include (there may be some exceptions to these):**

- Stick to existing tracks
- Adapt your travel techniques to the terrain you are in
- Carry all your waste/ garbage out with you (reduce excess packaging to begin with, take appropriate bags/ containers to contain and transport unavoidable waste/ garbage)

Manage campsites carefully

- Camp on durable ground
- Do not pollute water sources
- Dispose of grey water appropriately (the exact method will depend on the environment you're in. Some camping areas will have sinks or drains appropriate for grey water disposal. Other methods include collecting all grey water generated through cooking, handwashing and toothbrushing in a container, sieving it to remove all food scraps, and carrying these food scraps out with your other waste. Remaining wastewater can either be disposed of in a 10cm deep hole at least 50m from waterways, or by pouring it over a wide area of ground at least 50m from waterways.
- Carry out all rubbish and food scraps

Manage toilet waste responsibly

- Consider the availability of toilets when planning trips, make the most of them when available!
- General guidance for peeing in the outdoors: put any toilet paper used into a durable bag and carry it out with you (in some cases it may be possible to safely burn your toilet paper)

General guidance for pooing in the outdoors:

- For environments with plenty of soil and trees: dig a 15-20cm deep cathole at least 50m from any waterway. Put some leaves/ organic matter into the hole before filling to speed up the decomposition process and ensure everything is well buried. Toilet paper needs to be well buried or carried out
- For more fragile environments without much soil and trees: carry it out with you using an appropriate system (biodegradable bags etc.) and dispose of appropriately

- **Manage fireplaces carefully. General guidelines:**

- Stoves don't require firewood and leave less of a footprint than fires; they may be more appropriate
- Are there fire rules/ regulations in place? (common in summer in some locations)
- Where available, use existing fireplaces in established campsites
- Ensure any new fires are constructed in a way that leaves no evidence that a fire has been there (variety of methods to achieve this)



05

ACT WITH RESPECT AND COMPASSION TOWARDS PLACES, THE NATURAL WORLD AND OTHER PEOPLE

- Following the 4 guidelines above will help us to act with respect and compassion towards the natural world and each other. It's also important that we think carefully about the places we are in, and some of the other animals, plants and people that we may encounter.
- Different places have their own unique natural histories, landscapes, ecosystems, historical and current relationships with people. Places have looked quite different in the past and will look different again in the future. By learning what we can of these places and their stories, we show respect to the environments we are in, enrich our own experience, and help to develop our understanding and relationship with the world around us.
- What animals might we encounter on this trip? What do we do if we see one of these animals? Are there any wildlife observation rules we should know about?
- Are there any dangerous animals in the environment we are heading into? How do we avoid these, what do we do if we encounter one?
- Are there any rare or poisonous plants in the environment we are heading into? How do we avoid these? What do we do if we accidentally touch one?
- Are there any indigenous or local people for whom this area is important? Do they have any customs, values or practices we should be aware of?
- What other groups of people might we encounter on our trip? How do we act with respect and compassion towards them?
- What are the stories of this place?

What are the stories of this place?

- What has this place looked like in the past? What might it look like in the future?
- What is the cultural significance of the places we will be travelling through?
- How have people interacted with this place in the past, how do people interact with it now, how might people interact with it in the future?

- **What can we learn from this place? How is this place interconnected with my home place?**

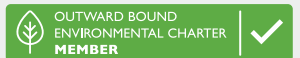




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