

Leave No Trace

LNT or Leave No Trace is a core BM principle. This book describes how we plan to handle LNT/MOOP.

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LNT Lead Responsibility

Leave No Trace Lead

Position Title: Leave No Trace Lead (aka LNT Lead)

Location: New York Dangerous - Burning Man Camp (Black Rock City, Nevada) - 8:30 & C

Duration: Temporary (Dates of Burning Man event, including pre and post-event setup and teardown)

Position Overview

The Leave No Trace (LNT) Lead is responsible for ensuring that our Burning Man camp adheres to the principles of Leave No Trace, maintaining the environmental integrity of our camp area, and leaving the site as we found it. This role involves planning, educating camp members, and executing cleanup efforts during and after the event.

Key Responsibilities

Pre-Event Planning:

- Develop a comprehensive Leave No Trace plan for the camp.
- Coordinate with the camp leadership team to integrate LNT principles into camp activities.
- Procure necessary supplies for waste management and cleanup (e.g., trash bags, recycling bins, MOOP (Matter Out of Place) sticks).

Education and Training

- Conduct pre-event training sessions on LNT principles for all camp members.
- Provide ongoing education and reminders about LNT practices throughout the event.
- Create and distribute educational materials (e.g., flyers, signs) to promote awareness.

During the Event

- Monitor camp activities to ensure compliance with LNT practices.
- Organize and oversee daily cleanup efforts, including sorting and disposing of waste properly.
- Address any environmental concerns promptly, ensuring minimal impact on the playa.

Post-Event Cleanup

- Lead the final camp cleanup, ensuring the site is thoroughly cleaned and free of MOOP.
- Conduct a detailed MOOP sweep, documenting and addressing any issues found.
- Coordinate with the camp leadership to transport waste off-site for proper disposal.

Reporting

- Prepare a post-event report summarizing LNT efforts, challenges, and successes.
- Provide recommendations for improving LNT practices for future events.

Qualifications

- Passion for environmental stewardship and commitment to the principles of Leave No Trace.
- Previous experience with LNT practices, preferably at Burning Man or similar events.
- Strong organizational and leadership skills.
- Ability to educate and motivate others.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Physical ability to perform manual cleanup tasks and work in harsh desert conditions.

Benefits

- Contributing to the preservation of the Burning Man ethos and environment.
- Being part of a dedicated and passionate community.
- Gaining leadership experience and enhancing environmental management skills.
- **This year, we decided to waive camp dues for qualified leads!**

Principles

Principles: High Level

The LNT plan encourages community participation and interactivity. Some LNT principles include:

Rethink	Reduce	Reuse	Recycle	Restore
Respect	Plan ahead	Prepare	Travel & camp on durable surfaces	Dispose of waste properly
Leave what you find	Minimize campfire impacts	Respect wildlife	Educate	Love ♥

I added "Educate" and "Love" because I felt they were missing. Each principle not only guides behavior at the event but also enhances the overall experience by fostering a sustainable, respectful, and inclusive community.

Principles: Detailed Review

Let's review each one of them that apply to Burning Man / Black Rock city, and figure out what they mean and how we can implement them.

1. Rethink

Rethink involves challenging conventional ideas about consumption and lifestyle, especially in a temporary city like Black Rock City. Participants are encouraged to reconsider their needs versus wants, opting for sustainable choices that contribute less to waste and more to communal well-being. This should happen BEFORE you even leave to Burning Man.

Did you buy stuff for the event? Carefully review and consider how it is packaged. Remove any unnecessary packaging. If you plan to eventually dispose of some packaging, just do it in advance before you leave your home.

2. Reduce

Reduce focuses on minimizing waste and excess. At Burning Man, this could mean bringing only the essential items required for survival and enjoyment, thus reducing the amount of waste generated and resources consumed.

Even the most minimalistic people I met at the event still told me that they ended up not using 20% of the items they brought with them. This doesn't mean coming un-prepared, it just means we need to learn from past events and be careful and intentional with what we bring with us to the event.

3. Reuse

Reuse encourages the creative repurposing of items. Burners can implement this by designing costumes, shelters, and decorations from materials that can be used multiple times or in various ways, reducing the need for new materials and minimizing waste.

For example in our camp we try to reuse as many items as possible from previous years. But this also means that when you buy an item in the first place, you buy it because you think it can be reused.

4. Recycle

Recycle ensures materials are reprocessed into new products. Participants can sort their recyclables according to provided guidelines and use designated recycling stations, supporting waste management efforts at the event.

5. Restore

Restore aims at leaving the environment as it was or better. After the event, attendees should ensure they leave no trace, restoring their campsite to its original state and thus preserving the natural beauty of the desert environment.

6. Respect

Respect covers the broad spectrum of respecting the community, culture, and environment of Burning Man. This includes honoring the rights and boundaries of other participants, the local laws, and cultural norms.

7. Plan Ahead

Plan Ahead involves thorough preparation for the event's harsh desert environment. This includes having enough water, food, shelter, and medical supplies to ensure safety and reduce unexpected resource depletion.

8. Prepare

Prepare dovetails with planning but focuses on personal readiness for all possible scenarios. This includes understanding and preparing for the environmental conditions, communal expectations, and personal needs during the event.

9. Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces

Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces emphasizes the importance of minimizing impact on the land. Participants should use established paths and camping areas to avoid damaging the fragile desert ecosystem.

10. Dispose of Waste Properly

Dispose of Waste Properly is crucial in a leave-no-trace context. Attendees must manage their waste, using appropriate disposal methods for trash, recycling, and human waste to keep the site pristine.

11. Leave What You Find

Leave What You Find encourages participants to enjoy the natural and artistic environments without altering them. This includes not taking souvenirs such as rocks, plants, or artifacts from the site.

12. Minimize Campfire Impacts

Minimize Campfire Impacts means using designated areas for fires and ensuring all flames are completely extinguished to prevent wildfires and reduce pollution.

13. Respect Wildlife

Respect Wildlife is about avoiding interactions with wildlife. In the desert setting of Burning Man, it means not feeding, harassing, or harming the local fauna.

14. Educate

Educate involves sharing knowledge about the principles of LNT and the specific cultural expectations of Burning Man. Educating fellow participants about sustainability and community responsibilities helps maintain the event's ethos.

15. Love

Love symbolizes a profound respect and care for the community, environment, and oneself. At Burning Man, it's about fostering a supportive, inclusive, and positive environment where all feel welcomed and valued.

Products & Techniques

Trash collection / storage

Products we tested & liked

Name & Purpose	Link
Bag Caddy This product is easy to stow, weighs very little and holds your bag open so people can easily throw stuff in!	FEED GARDEN Trash Bag Holder, Outdoor Metal Leaf Bag Holder Stand
39 Gallon Bags with Drawstring Those bags are strong and can be sealed shut with the drawstring	Amazon Basics Lawn & Leaf Drawstring Trash Bags, Unscented, 39 Gallon, 40 Count
Laminating Sheets These sheets will protect your paper signs from being torn, and you could even reuse the signs year over year!	Amazon Basics Thermal Laminating Sheets A4 Size
Can crusher If every drinker crushes their cans, they take up less space. You hang this thing next to your Aluminum collection bin and ask everybody in the camp to use it OR ELSE! ☐☐	McKay Heavy Duty Wall Mounted Aluminum Crusher

What bins do I need?

You will need bins (and signage) for the following trash categories:

- Plastics that can be recycled
- Plastics & Papers that can not be recycled
- Aluminum based containers (typically drinks)
- Non-Aluminum based containers (steel and other metals, typically tuna cans and other preserved foods)
- Glass containers (lids are typically steel and should go to the Non-Aluminum bin!)
- Cardboard & Paper that can be recycled
- Batteries & Electronics & other toxic things

How do I get rid of stuff?

Compost: There is a compost camp! see below in the Organics / Compost section.

Aluminum cans: There is a recycling camp near the BMORG tent that will take your aluminum cans. If the cans are not crushed, they have a station where you can crush your cans before dumping them into this massive container (in 2023 I saw 3 such containers, and they were all

nearly full!!!). It is clearly better if you have a can crusher in your camp because if every person who drinks something crushes their own can, it is less work for you, and you can also fit more cans in a bag, and also reduce the number of times you have to walk to the aluminum recycling camp.

All the rest: Unfortunately you have to take all the rest with you!



Organics / Compost

Use the compost camps!

Black Rock City has at least one (but probably more!) camp that will take your compostables, as long as there are no plastic stickers on the fruits/vegetables, and as long as it's been dried. The products below will help you dry your compostables which will make it a lot easier to transport, and will of course make it smoother when you reach the compost camp (they can TELL when it looks perfect, and you'll be able to just drop it off and leave!).

<https://www.ideate.camp/composting-signup>

Properly prepare our compost

Name & Purpose	Link to product
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<p>Burlap Bags</p> <p>You put your compostables in this bag for transportation to compost camp. They will usually give you an empty bag in return (either your own, or another bag!). The nature of this fabric is that it allows the compost to continue drying while it awaits transportation.</p>	<p><u>Heavy Duty Reusable Burlap Bags</u></p>
<p>Drying Barrier</p> <p>You hang this using stakes in the ground, so it doesn't touch the ground. Ideally you also put some tarp underneath so that compostables don't drip/leak onto the Playa. You then put the compostables on top of this bag to dry in the sun. Once they are dry, they take up less space, weigh less, and don't smell at all!</p>	<p><u>Eco friendly Disposable Planter Biodegradable Barrier</u></p>

How we did in 2023

We were not the worst!

But apparently, we were not the best either...



As you can see above, our activities area was yellow, and there's also a red area. However we did have some "guests" park on our plot after everybody had already left, and I'm pretty sure they were on that red area. We don't know what they left behind after our departure from the playa. What this means is that to cover ourselves next year, we should make sure we take photos of our plot right before we leave.

So what happened exactly?

This happened:



The Mud apocalypse happened (aka Mudpocalypse). We were doing pretty good until the rains turned playa dust into the stickiest mud you can imagine.

Even the porta-potties were a disaster and for a while, sanitation could not reach the porta-potties and they were not emptied or cleaned:



You could also tell things got chaotic and that people forgot all about the 10 principles because people threw cans and other products into the portos. I can only imagine the work the sanitation crew had to do to get those portos back to optimal condition...

Overall summary

Overall: We still passed the inspection and I am pretty sure BMORG was more lenient and understanding than usual this year due to the Mud situation. It was definitely challenging for everybody.

We had several trash receptacles, one per trash type. We even started drying compostables in mesh bags until the rains ruined those plans as well (you can't dry anything when it's all wet and raining around you). Our trash bags had a designated location right next to our utilities uHaul truck, and we properly got rid of our trash in Reno.

We took our cardboard to a cardboard recycling facility. We got rid of our regular trash at a regular trash disposal facility. We also disposed of other large items (such as our piano) at a special recycling facility for mixed materials:

