

Tread Monster

This interactive skit introduces the Tread Lightly! principles by teaching Tread Monster how to leave a lighter treadprint on nature.

Grade Level: all ages

Objectives:

- Students will be able to list at least three of the five Tread Lightly! principles and two ways to follow each of them.

Materials:

- Use your imagination to fashion these props. Hint - cardboard, scraps of fabric, markers and glue can go a long way!
- Tread Monster - handle bars, owner's manual, helmet, goggles, gloves, long sleeves, long pants, backpack, garbage, first aid kit, goat heads
- Audience costumes - cryptobiotic soil, fox, two horses
- Desert Setting - trailhead, no trespassing and stream crossing signs; blue tarp; sage brush
- Narrator - Tread Lightly! principle signs

Appendixes:

- Skit Outline: Page 5
- Owner's manual cover: Page 6
- Cryptobiotic soil photo: Page 7

Time Considerations:

Preparations: 15 minutes*

Lesson Time: 25 - 35 minutes

Activity: 20-30 minutes

Conclusion: 5 minutes

*Prop creation is not included in prep time

Related Lesson Plans:

Trash Timeline, Tread Lightly! Memory, Recreation Role Plays, Are You Prepared?, Stop the



Nevada Department of Education Standards

Health - Self Management

7.2.1 Identify responsible personal health behaviors.

7.5.1 Students demonstrate behaviors that avoid or reduce health risks.

Excellence in Environmental Education Guidelines

Strand 4 - Personal and Civic Responsibility

D) Learners understand that they have responsibility for the effects of their actions.

This lesson has been adapted from The Center's *Impact Monster Skit*:

Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. (2007). *Impact Monster Skit*. In *Leave No Trace 101: 101 Ways to Teach Leave No Trace* (pp. 28-30).

Background

Tread Lightly! principles: Travel Responsibly

- Stay on designated trails and areas
- Go over, not around, obstacles in the trail
- Cross streams at designated fords
- Avoid wet, muddy trails when possible

Respect the Rights of Others

- Share the trail with other recreational users
- If you're crossing private property get permission
- Leave gates as you found them
- Yield the right of way to those passing you or traveling uphill

Educate Yourself

- Have a map of the area so you won't get lost
- Find out the regulations of the public lands you're visiting

• Know how to operate your equipment safely

Avoid Sensitive Areas

- such as meadows, lakeshores, wetlands and streams
- Respect wildlife and their habitat
- Avoid disturbing historical and archeological sites

Do Your Part

- Model appropriate behavior
- Leave the area better than you found it
- Properly dispose of waste
- Minimize use of fire
- Avoid spreading invasive species
- Restore degraded areas

Preparation

Two adults are needed for this skit - one to be the narrator (who leads the group discussion) and Tread Monster.

Note that Tread Monster supposedly can't see the narrator, it's just a voice, kind of like...oh say, her conscious.

Set up the desert setting before the audience arrives.

Choose participants from the audience to play: cryptobiotic soil, signs, sage brush, two horse riders. Give them a brief description of what they are going to be doing in the skit.

Doing the Activity

Tread Monster Skit:

Narrator: Hello, my name is ___ from Nevada Outdoor School. I want to start today by asking a question. By show of hands, how many of you have heard of Tread Lightly!? (hopefully some people raise their hands) That's great!

When it comes to nature we want to leave as small of a footprint or treadprint as possible. And that's why we follow the Tread Lightly! principles.

Tread Monster is going on an ATV ride today and we're going to help her learn about these Tread Lightly! principles. When Tread Monster does something that doesn't follow the principles I'm going to hold up a sign that says the principle that needs to be followed and you're going to

say it with me. Let's practice! *[hold up a couple of the signs to practice]* Awesome! Now remember, when I hold up the signs you're going to say it with me.

OK, let me paint you a picture... We're going to go on an ATV ride in the Santa Rosa Mountains. It's a beautiful fall day with blue skies, aspen trees painting the mountains with orange and yellow and a cool breeze. You can feel the breeze on your face and see the expansive views of the valley – enjoy the experience.

Tread Monster: *[rides up on ATV]* Ooohhhh what an awesome day! I can't wait to get on the trail! I just bought my first ATV and I'm excited to ride it! The dealership said I should read the owner's manual before I ride, but ehh how hard can it be? *[throws owners manual over shoulder]*

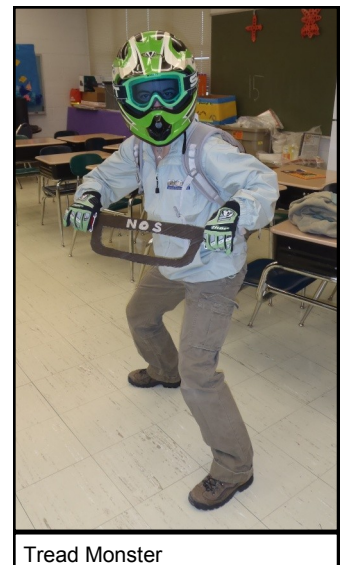
Narrator: *[holds up sign]* Educate Yourself! Tread Monster is not prepared to ride her ATV. The owner's manual has lots of important information about how your ATV works and what you should do in certain situations. Reading your owner's manual is important!

Tread Monster: *[looks around wondering where the voice is coming from, shrugs]* Welp, I better get on my way. Got my helmet, goggles, gloves, pants and long sleeves. Now if only I could find that map...*[searches in pack and pockets]*...oh well. I'm sure the trail is well marked – we'll call it an adventure.

Narrator: Awesome job having all of your protective gear! But... *[holds up sign]* Educate Yourself! Tread Monster is not prepared for her ride. Without a map she could get lost.

Tread Monster: I don't know where that voice is coming from but I'll be juuuuusstt fine - thanks.

[rides a little way and encounters switchbacks] Uuuugggghhhh I don't want to ride up all those switchbacks, I'm just going to make my own trail straight up this hill and save some time and have some fun! *[cuts through the crowd instead of going around the rows of people]*



Narrator: *[holds up sign]* Travel Responsibly! Tread Monster didn't stay on the designated trail. Going off trail can cause erosions or new-unwanted paths, resulting in riding areas closing.

Tread Monster: *[looks around]*

wondering where the voice is coming from, shrugs and keeps riding]

Narrator: A fox walks out from behind a sage brush near the trail and Tread Monster sees it.

Tread Monster: Oh! Fox! I wonder how fast it can run! *[speeds off chasing the fox]*

Narrator: *[holds up sign]* Avoid Sensitive Areas! Tread Monster needs to avoid spooking wildlife and keep her distance - that definitely includes not chasing them. Causing wildlife stress can be harmful to them.

Tread Monster: *[mumbles something about who keeps saying that stuff]* I just wanted to see how fast it could run...

Oh look at that hill climb! Hmm it's on private property. I'm sure they won't mind if I ride up there really quick. *[speeds up hill knocking over sign]*

Narrator: *[holds up sign]* Respect the Rights of Others! Tread Monster, if you want to cross private property you need to contact the land owner first.

Tread Monster: *[grumbles fine...turns around back to the sign and puts it upright then keeps riding. [sees the cryptobiotic soil.]* Ohh, that looks fun! Perfect place for some donuts cause there are no other tracks!

Narrator: *[holds up sign]* Avoid Sensitive Areas! Tread Monster there's a reason the designated trail doesn't go through the

cryptobiotic soil - it's an extremely sensitive habitat. It can take more than 250 years for this living soil to fully recover. Remember, we don't want to give anyone reasons to close our riding areas...

Tread Monster: Like they'd close an area because one person road in the cryptobiotic soil...Whatever, I'll go play in the stream then. *[leaves cryptobiotic soil and rides in stream]*

Narrator: *[holds up sign]* Travel Responsibly! Oh Tread Monster...remember that designated trail thing?? That applies for water crossings too - only cross where the trail does. We don't want to damage the resources.

Tread Monster: Yeah...I guess. *[rides back to stream crossing sign]* Well I'm going to take a break by the stream. *[finishes crossing stream and parks on far side]* I'm hungry after all that riding, uh oh and I have a cut on my arm, good thing I brought that first aid kit. *[dumps pack out in search of food and first aid kit]*

Narrator: Good job bringing a first aid kit, but... *[holds up sign]* Do Your Part! Remember to pack out what you pack in, we don't want to leave litter behind.

Tread Monster: Yeah...all right... *[picks up litter and puts it back in pack and sticks goat heads on costume]*

Well I think I'll start heading back now. *[Gets on ATV and crosses the stream correctly]*

Narrator: Coming the other direction on the trail are two people riding horses.

Tread Monster: Hmm I'm not sure what to do, horses can be a little jumpy...should I ride past them quickly or stop and let them pass?

Narrator: *[holds up sign]* Respect the Rights of Others! When encountering horses you should pull to the side of the trail, take your helmet off so the horses recognize you as a person and let them pass.

Tread Monster: *[follows directions and waves to the riders as they pass]* Now that they passed safely I'll get my helmet back on and ride back to the trailhead.

Hmm I'm supposed to go for another ride over in the Sonoma Mountains in a couple days I can save some time and just wash my ATV after that ride.

Narrator: *[holds up sign]* Do Your Part! While that might sound like a good idea, do you see all the goat heads that you picked up on this trail? Washing your ATV after every ride can help stop the spread of invasive species.

Tread Monster: I do hate those goat heads! I'll do anything to help stop the spread of those darn things! I'll wash my ATV as soon as I get home!

So let me get this straight voice, I want to follow the Tread Lightly! principles so I can

protect the environment and the areas where I want to ride can stay open?

Narrator: Exactly! Plus, they are also for your safety and the safety of others.

Tread Monster: All right this sounds important, we better go over these one more time. [*sit with audience and invite helpers to sit too*]

Conclusion

Narrator: Alright, but you all have to help me...I'm going to hold up each principle and then you all can help me by raising your hands and naming ways we can follow that principle...

Thank you all for helping Tread Monster learn about Tread Lightly! principles.

Assessment

Informally evaluate participants' knowledge by noting how many people raise their hands to answer the questions during the conclusion of the skit and if you get correct answers.

Extension

Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* is a great outdoor ethics story that engages youth and as an added bonus calms a rowdy group down.

Sources

- Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. (2007). Impact Monster Skit. In *Leave No Trace 101: 101 Ways to Teach Leave No Trace* (pp. 28-30).

Images:

- Panoramio. *Cryptobiotic soil on the esplanade*. Retrieved March 10, 2010, from <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/23570479>

Vocabulary

ATV: all-terrain vehicle

Cryptobiotic soil: This crust consisting of tiny communities of living organisms is found in desert environments and is extremely vulnerable to foot traffic. It can take more than 250 years for this living soil to fully recover. In a nutshell - living soil that can be destroyed by one footprint.

Erosion: the movement of sediment from one place to another, usually from a mountain to a valley

Invasive Species: a non-native species that takes over native species' habitats

Tread Monster Skit Outline

Narrator - intro, audience participation, paint scene

Tread Monster - enter on ATV, throws away owner's manual

Narrator - Educate Yourself!

Tread Monster - safety gear but no map

Narrator - Educate Yourself!

Tread Monster - cuts switchbacks

Narrator - Travel Responsibly! a fox wonders into view

Tread Monster - chases the fox

Narrator - Avoid Sensitive Areas!

Tread Monster - hill climb on private property

Narrator - Respect the Rights of Others!

Tread Monster - cryptobiotic soil

Narrator - Avoid Sensitive Areas!

Tread Monster - rides in stream

Narrator - Avoid Sensitive Areas!

Tread Monster - cut on arm, first aid kit, litter

Narrator - Do Your Part! horses riding up the trail

Tread Monster - not sure what to do when encountering horseback riders

Narrator - Respect the Rights of Others!

Tread Monster - end ride; goat heads stuck in shoes, going on another ride soon, wash after that

Narrator - Do Your Part!

Tread Monster - I want to follow Tread Lightly to protect the environment and my favorite riding areas?

Narrator - exactly, plus it's for your safety

Tread Monster - this sounds important, can we review

Narrator - goes over Tread Lightly! principles with audience help



ATV XJ400

Owner's Manual



45X-46744-456



tread lightly!®



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER
IMPREIMÉ SUR PAPIER RECYCLÉ
IMPRESO EN PAPEL RECICLADO

PRINTED IN WINNEMUCCA
2010.46-4.3X5 CR
(F,E,G)



Cryptobiotic Soil
Living soil that
can be destroyed
by one footprint