SCOUTS BUSHCRAFT

Leave No Trace and Woodland Conservation

Activity Risk Assessment

Activity: 60-minute woodland learning session, observation walk and approved low-impact conservation task

Location: _____ **Date:** _____

Leader / assessor: _____ **Group:** _____

■■ / participants: _____ **Review date:** _____

Scope	Outdoor session on an approved site; walking on agreed routes, observing habitats and carrying out a pre-approved litter or recording task.
Not included	No fire lighting, knives or tools, water entry, plant picking, foraging, tree work, deadwood removal or handling unknown / hazardous waste. Assess these separately if ever authorised.
Risk scale	Initial and residual ratings below are indicative. The leader must assess the actual site, group, weather and controls and amend ratings before the activity.

Hazards, who may be harmed and control measures

Hazard / risk	Who may be harmed	Initial risk	Control measures	Residual
Uneven, slippery or muddy ground; roots and trip hazards	Participants and leaders	Medium	Pre-check route and work area; use established paths; brief group about roots, mud and slopes; require suitable footwear; walk, do not run; adapt route for mobility and weather.	Low
Falling branches, unstable trees or overhead hazards	Participants and leaders	Medium	Inspect from ground level before use; do not gather beneath visibly damaged or storm-affected trees; avoid dead or leaning trees and cordon off unsafe areas; follow site manager instructions; stop and relocate if conditions change.	Low
Getting lost, separated or leaving the agreed area	Participants	Medium	Set clear boundaries and meeting point; use buddy pairs; agree headcounts and group signals; keep group together with front and rear supervision; carry a charged phone / communication device; follow the missing-person procedure.	Low
Weather: cold, heat, rain, wind, lightning or poor visibility	Participants and leaders	Medium	Check forecast and local alerts; require suitable layers, waterproofs and footwear; provide drinking water and sun protection as appropriate; shorten, postpone or stop for unsafe conditions, high winds or lightning; use an indoor alternative if needed.	Low
Watercourses, ponds, steep banks or deep / fast water	Participants	Medium	Keep to agreed routes and safe observation points; establish boundaries well back from edges; maintain close supervision; do not enter or cross water; avoid slippery banks; identify emergency access and rescue arrangements before starting.	Low
Stings, bites, ticks, nettles, brambles and irritating plants	Participants and leaders	Medium	Wear suitable clothing and closed footwear; brief group not to touch or taste unknown plants; check for ticks after the activity and remove promptly using an appropriate tick tool; wash exposed skin; follow first-aid procedures for stings, bites or reactions.	Low
Allergic reaction, asthma or other individual medical needs	Affected participant	Medium	Collect relevant medical and emergency information in line with organisation policy; identify triggers where known; ensure prescribed medication is accessible and used according to the individual's plan; leaders know how to summon help; check food / plant exposure is not part of the activity.	Low
Contact with litter, sharp objects, animal waste or contaminated materials	Participants and leaders	Medium	Use litter pickers and suitable gloves for ordinary litter only; never handle needles, broken hazardous items, chemicals, dead animals or unknown substances; mark area, keep group away and report to site manager; wash hands after task; dispose of collected waste as directed.	Low
Wildlife disturbance, nests, dens or fragile habitats	Wildlife and participants	Low–Medium	Observe quietly from a distance; do not touch nests, dens, eggs, young animals or wildlife; avoid sensitive areas and seasonal restrictions; do not move logs, deadwood or habitat piles; stop observations if animals show signs of disturbance.	Low
Group activity, behaviour or inadequate supervision	Participants and leaders	Medium	Set behaviour expectations and boundaries; maintain appropriate leader-to-participant ratios under current organisational rules; position leaders to see the group; use buddy checks and regular headcounts; adapt tasks to age, ability and additional needs.	Low

Hazard / risk	Who may be harmed	Initial risk	Control measures	Residual
Manual handling during litter collection or carrying equipment	Participants and leaders	Low–Medium	Keep loads light; use team handling only when appropriate; do not lift heavy, sharp or awkward objects; use litter pickers; avoid twisting and overreaching; leaders handle equipment that requires specialist handling.	Low
Biosecurity: transferring seeds, soil, mud or plant material	Woodland habitats and wider environment	Medium	Clean footwear and equipment before and after the visit where facilities allow; remove mud and plant material at designated cleaning points; do not move soil, plants or water between sites; follow site-specific biosecurity instructions.	Low
Emergency, injury or sudden change in site conditions	Participants and leaders	Medium	Leader carries first-aid kit and charged communication device; know exact site access point and location details; brief emergency signal and evacuation route; maintain headcounts; stop activity, make area safe and follow organisation emergency procedures.	Low

Before the activity – leader checks

■ Confirm landowner / site manager permission, activity boundaries, access, toilets and site-specific rules.

■ Walk the route and task area immediately before the session; check weather, ground, overhead branches, water edges and any new hazards.

■ Confirm attendance, emergency contacts, relevant medical information and additional support needs in line with policy.

■ Check leader cover, first-aid provision, communication device, charged phone and emergency access arrangements.

■ Brief participants on boundaries, buddy system, staying on paths, wildlife respect, hygiene and what not to touch.

■ Confirm the conservation task is approved. Use no tools, fire, water entry, plant removal or habitat alteration under this assessment.

During and after the activity

• Maintain active supervision and regular headcounts; stop if a control cannot be maintained.

• Reassess when weather, ground conditions, group behaviour or site conditions change.

• Report hazards, incidents, near misses, invasive species sightings and hazardous waste to the site manager through the agreed route.

• Check all participants and equipment before leaving; take collected litter to the designated disposal point.

• Clean footwear and equipment as required by the site's biosecurity guidance; wash hands after the activity.

Emergency arrangements

Nearest access / meeting point	_____
Emergency contact / site manager	_____
First-aid lead and kit location	_____
Communication method	_____
Emergency procedure	Stop activity, make the area safe, give first aid within competence, contact emergency services when required, and send a leader to guide responders to the agreed access point. Follow organisational procedures.

Risk assessment review and approval

Overall residual risk after controls	To be determined by the responsible leader after site-specific review: ■ Low ■ Medium ■ High
Assessor name / signature	_____
Date completed	_____
Reviewed by / date	_____

Important: This is a planning template, not a completed site assessment. The responsible leader must inspect the actual location, consider the specific group and conditions, confirm current organisational requirements, and amend hazards and controls before approval. A separate assessment is required for any activity involving fires, tools, water entry, foraging, tree work or habitat alteration.