

# Nature Navigators

##### Grant Type:

Mini Grant

##### Application Type:

Final Application

##### Project Manager 1 Name:

Eleanor McDonough

##### Project Manager 1 Status:

Staff

##### Project Manager 1 Email:

eleanormcdonough@arizona.edu

##### Project Manager 1 Department:

Outdoor Recreation, Campus Recreation

##### Project Manager 2 Name:

Mark Mellott

##### Project Manager 2 Email:

markmellott@arizona.edu

##### Project Manager 2 Status:

Staff

##### Project Manager 2 Department:

Outdoor Recreation, Campus Recreation

##### Project Manager 2 Role:

Co-lead

##### Project Advisor Name:

##### Project Advisor Email:

##### Project Advisor Department:

##### Fiscal Officer:

Eleanor McDonough

##### Fiscal Officer Email:

eleanormcdonough@arizona.edu

##### Fiscal Officer Department Name:

Outdoor Recreation, Campus Recreation

##### Requested Funding Amount

Only enter this number after completing the budget sheet (the budget template will round up your request).
Mini Grants may request $250 up to $5,000.
Annual Grants may request $5,001 up to $100,000, and up to three years of funding.

#### Year 1:

$4700

#### Year 2:

#### Year 3:

##### Official Project Name:

Nature Navigators

##### Primary Project Category:

Campus Life (Health & Wellbeing, Behavior Change

##### Secondary Project Category:

Natural Environment

##### Background and Context:

Please provide relevant background about your organization/team including your mission and/or expertise. Lay out the rationale for the proposed project, focusing on the issue that your project would address. This section is meant to give us more information about you and the context for the project, while the questions below provide space to go into detail about your proposal's plan and specifics.

###### Response:

Leave No Trace (LNT) and the Center for Outdoor Ethics is the primary organization that researches, promotes, and educates on skills and techniques that people can use to minimize their impact on the environment when participating in outdoor recreation activities. LNT is officially endorsed by all the nation’s leading land managers, including the National Park Service, National Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management, as well as all the country’s leading outdoor recreation organizations, including the National Outdoor Leadership School, Outward Bound, and Boy and Girls Scouts of America. Curriculum covers information on subjects such as building traceless campfires, sustainable campsite selection and use, proper waste disposal, and how to lessen the social impacts of outdoor recreation. Outdoor Recreation has a history and a continuing goal of creating a legacy of responsible recreation in the UArizona community. Leave No Trace principles are engrained in Outdoor Recreation’s practices. Formal staff training would allow for passing knowledge to student guides, participants on guided trips, and UA students who participate in LNT workshops. This project has been run in a similar fashion in the spring of 2023. Trips and workshops showed a lot of interest from the student population, but there were problems with follow-through. This is a trend we can see with free programs. This is why we have added a $10 fee to overnight and day trips. This should keep the courses attainable for most populations while providing a sense of commitment for the student. Previously, professional staff at Outdoor recreation have had their LNT Master certifications. These staff members have since moved on from the Outdoor Recreation center. This training series would certify two master instructors who are professional staff at Outdoor Recreation to avoid having to certify new staff members annually. We hope to continue this program for years to come. Eleanor, The Outdoor Recreation Specialist, and Mark, the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator will be the two full-time staff members getting their LNT master certifications and will ideally continue their positions at Outdoor Recreation for many years and will continue in the role of LNT master educator.

##### Project Description:

Please provide a thorough description and explanation of your project. Be explicit in what your team is proposing. What are the goals of your project? What will your project’s outcomes be? Outcomes should be SMART—specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. Describe how each objective will be achieved with the anticipated timeframes for each, including any key dates for when certain elements must start or be completed.

###### Response:

This project would utilize the Sustainability Fund to fund multiple levels of LNT training for UArizona students and staff and provide opportunities for UArizona students to act in leadership and educator roles during the process. The first step in this process is for the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator and Specialist to earn their LNT Master Educator certifications. The most easily attained course option would be the course from Jan 29th- Feb 2nd at Saguaro National Park through the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). Eleanor and Mark have already completed prerequisites for this class, and just require the funding to pay the deposit and course fee. This certification is obtained through a five-day backcountry course in Saguaro National Park. This will allow both staff members to facilitate Level 1 Instructor Certification Courses for Outdoor Recreation student staff and the community.

Knowledge will be passed down through a series of six events. Three are planned for the Spring semester of 2024 and the last three for the Fall 2024 semester. The first event will be a two-day backpacking course with Outdoor Recreation student staff to have interested students obtain their Level 1 Instructor Certification. To facilitate Level 1 Instructor courses, one master educator is required in addition to another master educator or an individual with a pre-existing level 1 instructor certification. The first trip in this series, being a staff training trip, is set intentionally to create a solid foundation of student leaders and educators to be co-instructors in future courses.

A 2-day backpacking trip and a 2-day camp and climbing trip will be offered to all students at UA. Students will earn a Level 1 instructor certification from these trips. A Day Hike and a Day Paddle Board Yoga trip will be offered to all students at UA and be completely student led. Participants of these day trips can provide LNT Skills Workshops and courses to their community. These four courses will have a $10 buy-in, and all food, transportation, gear, and guiding will be provided. The last event of this series will be a front country two-day, level 1 instructor course. This course will be of no cost and is targeted at students that are less familiar with the outdoors or may have a financial barrier to the trips that have a buy-in.

Knowledge of LNT practices will also be implemented into existing educational programs such as Women’s Initiative for Leadership in the Outdoors (WILO) and Girls on Outdoor Adventures for Leadership and Science (GALS). The curriculum and training will be added to WILO at no additional cost but will grant graduates of the program a level 1 instructor certification. Members of GALS will participate in LNT workshops designed by Outdoor Recreation student staff. Advertising material for these programs will be targeted towards BIPOC and LGBTQ+ groups on campus to gage interest in future programming specially designed for these communities.

##### Budget Narrative:

Use this section to provide supplemental justification for the items you are requesting on your budget sheet. Please break down your justifications into the budget categories: Personnel or operating budget. Do not list out each expense or repeat notes made in the budget template, but instead address why the line items are being requested and the purpose they will serve, providing elaboration when necessary.
If you are requesting funding for personnel, use this section to elaborate on the position you are creating and how the budget and timeline was established for it. If you plan to hire students, describe in what capacity. Describe relevant details thoroughly (wages, responsibilities, duration of job, extent of involvement, how you will solicit/ market these opportunities etc.).
Ensure the descriptions match the line items in the budget sheet.
If matching or supporting funds are secured for the project, identify the source and amount in this section, and detail the impact of the matching funds on your overall budget.

###### Response:

We are requesting funding for three of our student positions, registration for Leave No Trace Master Educator Course, meal support for the Leave No Trace Master Educator course, and operating expenses for Leave No Trace backcountry courses guided by Outdoor Recreation. To be able to run the LNT classes for UArizona students, there must be one Master Trainer, and one Level One instructor or an additional Master Trainer. As no one at Outdoor Recreation currently holds any Master Trainer or Level 1 instructor certification, it is necessary to certify two staff to start this process. To be able to distribute the hours worked on this project, we think it is necessary to certify two Master Trainers. Students who will be facilitating trips and workshops are already hired at Outdoor Recreation as trip or logistics staff. All current Student employees will be offered the opportunity to attend the Outdoor Recreation staff LNT Level 1 trainer course. Up to twelve employees can attend the training and will be selected by previous interest in LNT practices as well previous displays of work ethic and a 250-word description as to why they are passionate about this project. Once student employees are certified by Eleanor and Mark on the Outdoor Recreation Staff LNT Level 1 Trainer Course, they are expected to facilitate day trips and co-facilitate overnight trips. There is availability for seven student staff to Engage in the leadership roles created by these trips and workshops. This does not consider the availability for level 1 graduates to facilitate their own workshops using Outdoor Recreation’s facilities. The hours for trips and workshops would be in addition to the previously scheduled hours the students are working for Outdoor Recreation. Eleanor, The Outdoor Recreation Specialist, and Mark, the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator are full-time staff members at Outdoor Recreation therefore their wages are not reflected in the budget request. All student staff get paid 8hr/day on days they are facilitating trips or workshops. The wages in the budget request reflect current staff wages.
All the quotes for supplies and labor come directly from the Leave No Trace website and Campus Recreation Wage Matrix- factoring in the amount of hours in a course, cost of educational supplies, the most up-to-date information on Outdoor Recreation student employee pay, and the overhead of running backcountry courses.

##### Project Feasibility and Logistics:

The Campus Sustainability Fund will only fund projects that have completed the necessary work to ensure they can succeed, be completed in the grant’s timeline, or have an accurate budget.
Please provide a description of the work that has been completed so far to make this project feasible. Have all relevant partners been contacted/coordinated with? Have you received consent or authorization to complete your project (such as from Housing and Residence Life, Facilities Management, Parking and Transportation, etc.)? Please identify them in your response.
If you are making modifications to campus, do you have authorization or official quotes from Facilities Management to accurately identify the cost of labor and supplies?

###### Response:

To kick off this process, there are many different Leave No Trace Master Trainer courses that the Outdoor Recreation Professional Staff could register for in the spring. The most easily attained course option would be the course from January 29th- February 2nd at Saguaro National Park through the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). Eleanor and Mark have already completed prerequisites for this class, and just require the funding to pay the deposit and course fee. Permission has been granted by their supervisor to spend their work hours in the field to attain the Master LNT certification. Permits for areas where the backcountry courses will be facilitated are acquired. Gear, Wilderness First Responder certified staff, and transportation is secure through Outdoor Recreation.

After Eleanor, The Outdoor Recreation Specialist, and Mark, the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator earn LNT Master Educator Certifications the staff backpacking LNT Level 1 course will be conducted. During this course, a maximum of 12 Outdoor Recreation student staff can be certified as Level 1 instructors. The next course will be a LNT day trip where two Outdoor Recreation student staff with Level 1 certifications will act as the instructors and guides. This will be open to enrollment for all UArizona students. The final piece of the Spring semester programming will be an overnight level 1 certification course with enrollment open to all University students. This will be instructed and guided by Eleanor, the Outdoor Recreation Specialist and a LNT level 1 certified student staff. Similar programming will be conducted in the Fall semester, with one overnight level 1 certification course and one LNT day trip. The fall semester will have an addition of a free two-day LNT level 1 certification in the Outdoor Recreation classroom. Outdoor Recreation has already completed all the paperwork and planning associated with being an LNT training organization- both by submitting the LNT Organization Training Agreement and paying the LNT Organizational Membership fee that is paid from the Outdoor Recreation Program Budget.

##### Environmental Sustainability Outcomes:

Please provide a description of how you expect your project to advance environmental sustainability on campus. A definition of environmental sustainability is provided on our Guides and Tips page.

###### Response:

Access to knowledge on how to recreate sustainably is limited to the public. Without the ability to recreate responsibly and sustainably, benefits of outdoor recreation are outweighed by the negative impacts that it has on the earth. These include but are not limited to- destruction of fragile ecosystems or man-made forest fires and other disturbances. Education (through the Leave No Trace Training Series) is the crucial first step in awareness of the potential impacts that outdoor recreation can have on a natural environment.

This project will advance environmental sustainability first and foremost by being an educational tool for students on campus. Many groups and clubs on campus operate in the natural outdoor setting- participating in a range of recreation activities from hiking to climbing to camping. The Leave No Trace training series was designed with outdoor recreators in mind- with the intention to teach them to have as little long-term impact on ecosystems and natural processes as possible as they go about their recreation activities. These courses will be available to all students regardless of club or class status and will empower them to not only act as an educator for their own communities in this regard, but also as an advocate generally for mindful outdoor recreation practices.

##### Social Sustainability Outcomes:

Please provide a description of how you expect your project to advance social sustainability on campus. A definition of social sustainability is provided on our Guides and Tips page.

###### Response:

Outdoor recreation is a fundamental asset to modern-day society, giving citizens important life benefits such as decreased stress, time in nature, and physical activity. In the minds of many, time outdoors qualifies as a fundamental human need and fulfills an important aspect of connection.

The field of outdoor recreation was always one where white, male participants were overtly overrepresented. While the field has reached nearly gender parity and has statistically become more diverse, recent studies have shown that these same folks do not hold leadership positions in the same percentage by which they participate in the field.

One of the main avenues forward to correct this is to provide more educational opportunities to those not historically represented in the outdoor field- women, the LGBTQ+ population, and the BIPOC community. The Leave No Trace Training Series provides a unique opportunity for anyone even just adjacent to the outdoor field to become leaders and teachers. It would also provide a valuable sense of community, social capital, and empowerment to those involved to make social and environmental change in their respective communities.

Also in a bigger sense, this sort of training is an excellent step to providing participants with actionable steps that address the climate crisis through the tools of education, empowerment, and community outreach.

##### Student Leadership & Involvement:

Please provide a description of how your project will benefit students on campus regarding the creation of leadership opportunities or student engagement. What leadership opportunities exist within your proposal? If you plan to seek student involvement, include relevant details thoroughly and how you will solicit/ market these opportunities.

###### Response:

Up to 12 student employees from Outdoor Recreation will participate in the backpacking level 1 instructor course taught by Eleanor, The Outdoor Recreation Specialist and full-time student, and Mark, the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator. Seven of these students will then become co-instructors with Eleanor and Mark for all other level 1 courses and will become lead instructors for day trips and LNT workshops. Student employees will work approximately 8 hours per day when running a trip or workshop. They will be paid for this time and will gain valuable teaching and leadership experience.

Also, all students who participate in the Leave No Trace Trainer course or one of the Leave No Trace Awareness Workshops will participate in hands-on learning on both how to recreate in a more sustainable manner, as well as how to act as an educator and advocate for sustainable recreation practices. By offering multiple levels of engagement opportunities with various levels of time/effort commitment, we hope to bring many students to the project. Also, by offering a progression of involvement, going from participating in a LNT training to leading one, we hope to give students a deeper level of understanding and commitment to the sustainability principles we will be teaching.

##### Education, Outreach, and Behavior Change:

What opportunities does this project provide for members of the campus/community to learn about sustainability? How will your project educate the campus community and/or incorporate outreach and behavior change, particularly beyond the "sustainability choir?"
Please provide a description of how you expect your project will communicate its impacts to the campus community.

###### Response:

This project is primarily an educational undertaking to provide educational resources to the wider campus community. Its target audience is student leaders of groups that may benefit from this sort of sustainability training, and who will take what they have learned back to their own piece of the campus community. These student leaders are the main way that this project will communicate its impact and disseminate to the greater campus community- using the students as liaisons to the information they have learned. While the focus for the project this year is having UArizona students take the Leave No Trace Trainer series, there is the possibility to open these courses up to the broader Tucson community in the future- fostering environmental outreach beyond the campus bubble.

Beyond simply the “sustainability choir” this project is focused on empowering- teaching students the LNT principles and giving them skills to teach it themselves. Such empowerment goes beyond simple preachy LNT advertisements or marketing that could be seen on the side of a trail. For example- instead, putting the LNT focus on people and their ability to make environmental change.

Advertising for these courses will be done in the traditional Outdoor Recreation spaces including all three of campus recreation’s facilities, the campus recreation website, and outdoor recreation’s social media. The outreach for these programs will then be extended to specific groups on campus. Direct communication through emails will be conducted by the Outdoor Recreation Specialist to notify clubs and student organizations associated with the BIPOC and LGBTQ+ community of these opportunities.