Press release issued on behalf of Leave No Trace Ireland:

**LEAVE NO TRACE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN URGES CARE AND RESPECT FOR OUR OUTDOOR SPACES**

* *New national Love This Place campaign focuses on responsibility and respect for outdoor spaces to protect our natural environment*
* *Awareness campaign urges the public to embrace the ‘Leave No Trace’ Principles*

**[Monday, 30th May 2022]** - Leave No Trace Ireland, Ireland’s only outdoor ethics programme, which promotes the responsible use of the outdoors, has launched its third national awareness campaign urging the public exercise care in their enjoyment of the outdoors including public parks, open countryside, and beaches. Record numbers of people are taking part in outdoor activities, putting increased pressure on our outdoor spaces. The new campaign asks the public to Love This Place and Leave No Trace when enjoying the outdoors this summer.

The Love This Place Campaign – which is being run by Leave No Trace Ireland in conjunction with partner organisations from the sports, tourism and outdoor activities sectors – will include advertising across national and local radio and social media.

Speaking on the launch of the ‘Love This Place, campaign, Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD said:

*“The importance of outdoor recreation for our physical and mental wellbeing has become clearer than ever over the past two years. As we approach the summer months it’s vital that we all continue to enjoy the outdoors responsibly – whether you’re hiking, cycling or going for a picnic on the beach please do plan your activities ahead and play your part by leaving any outdoor spaces as you found them.”*

*“By leaving no trace and respecting our environment we can help to minimize our impact on the outdoors. Picking up after your dog, keeping them on a lead near wildlife and livestock, bringing your rubbish home with you and parking your car so it doesn’t block access points are all simple ways to enjoy the outdoors in a responsible way.”*

*As we enjoy more time in our shared outdoor spaces over the summer months remember to love this place and leave no trace”*

The 2022 campaign is a joint initiative with Government departments and leading state and independent organisations that promote outdoor activities and the responsible enjoyment of the countryside including Fáilte Ireland, Sport Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Department of Rural and Community Development, Dublin City Council, the Office of Public Works, Coillte, Waterways Ireland and Horse Sport Ireland.

Commenting, Leave No Trace Ireland Chief Executive, Maura Kiely, said:

*“All the indications are that this year we are going to see a welcome bounce back for tourism in Ireland. This will bring with it an increase in outdoor activities and renewed pressures on outdoor spaces and the countryside including the natural environment, wildlife, habitats, farming and sensitive ecosystems such as dunes and rivers.”*

*“Our campaign is making a direct appeal to everyone to consider and take responsibility for their activities and their impacts, and to follow the ‘Leave No Trace’ Principles.”*

*“The ‘Love this Place’ campaign asks all of us that love the outdoors to share our responsibility to protect our natural environment by taking simple actions such as planning ahead, cleaning up after a visit, managing our pet dogs. We should all strive to leave the outdoors as we find it for the next person to enjoy. ”*

*“This summer, we are also highlighting pressure points that are bearing the brunt of the increase in outdoor activities. These include an increase in dog fouling and worrying of farm livestock as the numbers of pet dogs continues to grow, and the devastation that can be caused by fires from uncontrolled and inappropriate use of campfires and barbeques in the countryside. 99% of wildfires in Ireland are the result of human activity in the outdoors. We can reduce and eliminate these impacts if we follow the ‘Leave No Trace’ Principles.”*

Welcoming the Leave No Trace Campaign , Minister Malcolm Noonan, Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform said :

*“We have a duty to our environment, to wildlife and to each other to be responsible stewards of the natural world – our national parks, woodlands, rivers, beaches, mountains and everywhere in between.*

*“ Loving nature, wildlife and the great outdoors means being thoughtful, prepared and proactive – packing a picnic rather than a disposable bbq that could cause a serious fire, bringing a bin bag to pick up rubbish that could otherwise harm wildlife, keeping dogs on leads rather than letting them go and potentially worrying farm animals or breeding birds, keeping our distance from wild birds, mammals and marine life and observing them without disturbing or disrupting them.”*

*“As more of us seek the beauty, exhilaration and escapism of outdoor recreation, our collective impact on the environment also increases. By being responsible and leaving no trace, we can help the wild places and species we love to stay wild.”*

Speaking at the launch, Minister of State for Sport and the Gaeltacht Jack Chambers said:

*"We have seen from previous years that the Leave No Trace campaigns have had a tangible impact on encouraging people to show care and respect for the outdoors and to enjoy being in nature’s beautiful surroundings.*

*"Studies have shown the mental and physical health benefits of being outdoors and getting exercise, and this programme encourages people to get active and try the beautiful outdoor activities this country has to offer, while being conscious to look after their environment.*

*“I want to thank the personnel involved in the roll out of this important programme and I look forward to supporting the ‘Love This Place’ campaign”.*

This year the public is being urged to take the following actions on key issues and pressure points in the outdoors:

**Littering**

1. Plan ahead and always bring a bin bag. By taking your rubbish home, you are playing your part in keeping our outdoor spaces litter free and beautiful.

**Dog Control & Fouling**

1. Bring poo bags and always pick up after your dog, bag it and safely bin it, or bring it home with you.
2. Keeping your dog on a lead shows consideration for others and avoids disturbing livestock and wildlife.

Campfires & BBQs:

1. No fires unless on a designated site. You should not light a campfire unless you have permission from the landowner and only ever in suitable, low risk locations.
2. If you are at a designated site where campfires are permitted, make sure you have the skills to set, use and extinguish a campfire. See leavenotraceireland.org for detailed guidance on how to set and use a campfire safely.
3. Do not use disposable BBQs in the countryside.

Further information and guidance for individuals, communities and organisations is available from <https://www.leavenotraceireland.org/love-this-place-leave-no-trace>.

ENDS

***Please Note :*** *Photos of the launch event are being distributed separately* ***by Finbarr O Rourke*** *and a selection of shots with captions are available from this link -*

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**Notes to Editors:**

The Love This Place awareness campaign will include advertising on national and local radio and across social media starting on May 30th, continuing throughout the months of June and July.

**Leave No Trace Ireland** is Ireland’s only outdoor ethics programme, which promotes the responsible use of the outdoors. Through education, research and partnerships, Leave No Trace Ireland enables and supports individuals, communities, organisations and companies in reducing the environmental impact of outdoor activities.

**Sport Ireland** is the authority tasked with the development of sport in Ireland. Sport Ireland Outdoors, a function of Sport Ireland, works with a large number of sporting bodies and other organisations to develop and promote a variety of outdoor sports, to support the development of recreational trails throughout Ireland, which are all developed to encourage more people to be active in the great outdoors.

**The National Parks and Wildlife Service is part of the Heritage Division of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage who are** responsible for managing the Irish State’s nature conservation responsibilities under national and European law.

**The Department of Rural and Community Development’s** mission is to promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable communities throughout Ireland. The Department of Rural and Community Development acts as Secretariat for **Comhairle na Tuaithe**– the Countryside Council – which is made up of representatives from farming organisations, recreational users of the countryside and State bodies with a responsibility or interest in the countryside. Comhairle na Tuaithe endorses Leave No Trace.

**The Office of Public Works (OPW)** is a government office that delivers public services for flood protection, managing government properties and heritage services.

**Fáilte Ireland** is the National Tourism Development Authority, and its role is to support the long-term sustainable growth in the economic, social, cultural and environmental contribution of tourism to Ireland.

**Waterways Ireland** is the cross-border navigational authority responsible for the management, maintenance, development, and promotion of over 1000 km of inland navigable waterways, principally for recreational purposes.

​​​**Coillte**, Ireland’s state forestry company, is responsible for managing 440,000 hectares of primarily forested lands. Coillte is the nation’s largest forester and provider of outdoor recreation space. It also enables wind-energy on the estate, processes forestry by-products and undertakes nature rehabilitation projects of scale. Coillte delivers the multiple benefits of forestry, including forests for climate, for nature, for wood and for people. For further information visit [www.coillte.ie](http://www.coillte.ie).

**Dublin City Council** (Irish: Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath) is the authority responsible for **local** government in the **city** of **Dublin** in **Ireland**.

**Horse Sport Ireland** is the national governing body for equestrian sport in Ireland and maintains the Irish Horse Register.