



Boulder Named First Leave No Trace Gold Standard Destination

BOULDER, CO (October 29, 2026): Visit Boulder has become the first destination management organization (DMO) to earn the prestigious Leave No Trace Gold Standard designation, establishing Boulder, Colorado, as the nation's first-ever Gold Standard Destination. Awarded by Leave No Trace, the national nonprofit dedicated to protecting the outdoors through responsible recreation, the recognition honors organizations that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to environmental stewardship and protecting natural resources by integrating science-based stewardship education into staff training, visitor communications, and partnerships with local land managers and community stakeholders.

"Leave No Trace is especially proud to recognize Visit Boulder as the first-ever Gold Standard Destination," said Dana Watts, Executive Director of Leave No Trace. "As our hometown community, Boulder holds a special place in the Leave No Trace story, making this designation particularly meaningful. By embedding responsible outdoor practices into the visitor experience, Boulder is setting an exciting precedent for destinations nationwide and demonstrating how tourism and environmental stewardship can go hand in hand."

To earn the Gold Standard designation, Visit Boulder demonstrated a sustained commitment to integrating Leave No Trace education into its operations and throughout the visitor journey through:

- **Strengthening sustainability partnerships** by collaborating with the City of Boulder, State of Colorado, and University of Colorado Boulder to establish a shared sustainability vision and guiding framework that aligns priorities, advances meaningful initiatives, and supports long-term sustainability goals.
- **Supporting conservation and stewardship** by partnering with local land managers, including Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP), to advance shared conservation goals, promote responsible recreation, and enhance visitor education.
- **Encouraging sustainable transportation** through partnerships with the City and County of Boulder to support alternative transportation options, including the Eldo, Chautauqua and Hesse Park-to-Park hiker shuttles, that improve access to outdoor recreation while reducing traffic congestion and environmental impacts.
- **Promoting responsible visitor practices** through the BoulderWise destination stewardship initiative, equipping hotels, local businesses, and tourism partners with educational resources and practical guidance that encourage sustainable travel and help protect Boulder's natural environment.

- **Leading by example** by training staff in Leave No Trace principles and empowering them to share responsible recreation practices with visitors, partners, and the broader community.

"Being named the first Gold Standard Destination is a tremendous honor for Boulder, and a reflection of our community's shared commitment to protecting the place we call home. We are incredibly grateful to our many partners, including Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks, the City of Boulder's Climate Initiatives department, the University of Colorado Boulder, local businesses, tourism partners, and community organizations, whose dedication has made responsible recreation a shared priority", said Charlene Hoffman, Visit Boulder CEO. "This recognition belongs to everyone wanting to preserve the natural beauty and unique character of Boulder while ensuring residents and visitors alike can enjoy it for generations to come. We are proud of our partnership with Leave No Trace and excited to continue building on this important work."

By earning the first Gold Standard Destination designation, Visit Boulder is helping establish a model for destinations nationwide, demonstrating how tourism organizations, land managers, and local businesses can work together to make responsible recreation a shared standard of care.

About Leave No Trace

Using science-based education, training for all, and community-driven stewardship, Leave No Trace works to protect the outdoors through prevention, helping people reduce their impact before damage occurs. The Leave No Trace Gold Standard designation recognizes sites and organizations implementing the highest standard of Leave No Trace education. For more information, visit: www.LNT.org

About Visit Boulder

Visit Boulder, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, is the official destination marketing/management organization for the city of Boulder, Colorado. Established in 1985, Visit Boulder strengthens the local economy by inspiring visitor connections to Boulder's vibrant landscape and unique culture. Learn more at BoulderColoradoUSA.com