

Keep It Wild



Leave No Trace Principles

Plan Ahead & Prepare

Proper planning is the best way to minimize your impact, while ensuring you have a safe and enjoyable wilderness trip.

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area, and plan your trip accordingly.
- Choose a route appropriate to your abilities and goals.
- Schedule your trip to avoid busy times and crowded areas.
- Travel in a small group to minimize congestion and impact.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and remote emergencies by taking appropriate clothing and equipment.
- Leave cans and bottles at home and repackage your food in reusable containers.
- Rely on a map and compass to eliminate the use of rock cairns or flagging tape.
- Take some training or hire a guide.



Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces

The wilderness traveler's challenge to "leave only footprints" is changing as we realize that the accumulation of even small physical impacts leaves a lasting impression on our wild areas.

- Walk single file in the middle of trails, even when wet or muddy. Detouring breaks down the trail edge, widening the path, and increasing overall impacts.
- Travel on durable surfaces where possible. Avoid steep loose slopes, fragile vegetation, wetlands, coastal dunes and other sensitive areas.
- In well travelled locations, use existing campsites where available.
- In pristine locations, camp on durable surfaces, where there are no signs of previous use, and use Leave No Trace camping techniques.
- Keep campsites small and away from water and trails. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is naturally absent.

Leave What You Find

People come to Wilderness Areas to enjoy them in their natural state. Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants, antlers and other natural objects as you find them.

- Examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Berries and plants are best left to feed resident wildlife. If you choose to pick berries, please keep your harvest modest and limit picking to areas of abundance.
- Minimize site alterations when setting up camp. Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches. Return things to their natural condition before moving on.
- Please do not introduce non-native plant or animal species.



Respect Wildlife

One of the greatest attractions to wild areas is the variety and abundance of wildlife. As a visitor, you should be aware that your presence affects animals – even through a single encounter.



- Learn about sensitive and endangered species in the area you are visiting.
- Be aware that wildlife may be especially sensitive in winter or when mating, nesting, or raising young.
- Never feed wild animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, exposes them to predators, and may endanger you or other people.
- Store rations and trash securely.
- In bear country, hang your food at night, and separate cooking and sleeping areas. Avoid all bear encounters and seek information on safe conduct in bear country from a knowledgeable source.
- Exercise special caution around marine mammals and seabirds by observing them only from a distance, using binoculars.
- Avoid stepping on or disturbing intertidal marine life (such as mussels, barnacles, crabs and urchins).

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Most travelers to Wilderness Areas are hoping to spend time in a wilderness setting, away from other people. Understand the value of wilderness for solitude and a "natural" experience.

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to others on the trail.
- Take rest breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors to minimize crowding.
- Let nature's sounds prevail and avoid loud voices and noises.
- If you take a dog, ensure it is well behaved and under control at all times. Dispose of pet feces as for human waste (carry out or bury away from trails and water).

Dispose of Waste Properly

Garbage left in wild areas is unsightly for other travelers and may pose a risk to wild animals. Improperly disposed human waste creates an unpleasant atmosphere for recreational travelers, and poses a risk to human health and wildlife through water contamination.

- If you pack it in, pack it out – including left over food, and litter.
- Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods, and clean up after others, as well as yourself.
- Resist the temptation to burn your garbage, as it seldom burns completely.
- Carry out solid human waste or dig a small hole in the ground ('cathole') and bury all toilet paper and feces. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished (see Standards below).
- Use toilet paper sparingly and fully bury it or pack it out. Pack out all hygiene products.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 50m away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater away from cooking and sleeping areas.
- Clean fish or game at least 50m from camp sites and trails.



Minimize Campfire Impacts

Campfires can cause lasting back country impacts. All wood (alive & dead) is important to ecosystem function. Careless campfires increase the likelihood of forest fire and blackened and messy fire pits diminish the wilderness experience for other users. Think carefully before deciding to build a fire – consider local regulations, ecological conditions, weather, skill and firewood availability.

- Consider using a lightweight stove for cooking and a candle lantern for light, as an alternative to campfires.
- If you choose to have a campfire, be sure to follow the Wilderness Area standards for camp fires (below).

Wilderness Area Standards

In addition to the Leave No Trace principles, special standards apply to certain activities within provincial Wilderness Areas, and are enforced under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*.

CAMPING & CAMPFIRES

Camping and campfires are permitted at designated sites, or where no sites are designated, according to the following conditions, as prescribed by a Minister's order issued pursuant to S.23(1) of the Act:

- Cutting and removal of vegetation, clearing of brush and leveling of ground is prohibited. New camp sites that require such activities may only be established with written authorization.
- All refuse and litter must be "packed out". "No trace" camping must be practiced. Campsites must be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition at all times.
- To dispose of human waste, a latrine hole must be dug 15-25cm deep, and at least 50 metres away from any trail or water source. Soiled toilet paper must be packed out or buried with the waste.

- No more than nine people are permitted at a campsite at any one time. Camping is prohibited where indicated.
- A campfire is only permitted in an existing campfire ring built on mineral soil or bare rock, or in a fire pan supplied by the user. Cutting or removal of vegetation and disturbance of organic soils is prohibited. Campfire rings must be less than 60cm in diameter, they must have a minimum clearance of 2 metres from flammable materials, and fires must be kept completely contained within the campfire ring. Campfires must be drowned thoroughly, and the ashes stirred repeatedly to ensure the campfire is completely extinguished.
- All vegetation is protected in Wilderness Areas. Firewood may be collected only from fallen dead wood.
- Campfires are prohibited where indicated by posted notices

WILDERNESS RECREATION

Wilderness recreation activities that have minimal environmental impact, such as walking, canoeing, kayaking and cross-country skiing are generally permitted.

FISHING, HUNTING & TRAPPING

Sport fishing and traditional patterns of hunting and trapping are generally permitted. Such activities are subject to the *Wildlife Act* and regulations, and may be further regulated by special restrictions within individual Wilderness Areas.

PRIVATE LANDS

Private lands adjacent to or surrounded by a Wilderness Area are not regulated by the Act. Anyone wishing to use such lands for recreation or other purposes must obtain permission from the landowner.

HIKING TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

Trail development and operation requires authorization from Nova Scotia Environment and Labour.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH

Scientific research is generally encouraged within Wilderness Areas. All researchers require a licence specifying terms and conditions for conducting research.

Vehicles and Bicycles

Under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*, "vehicle" means a motor vehicle and includes an all-terrain vehicle, a snowmobile, a motor boat, a motor vessel and an aircraft.

Public vehicle and bicycle use in wilderness areas is generally prohibited under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*. Vehicle use may be authorized only in limited and exceptional circumstances, on approved routes, under the terms of a licence or agreement.

For more information on vehicle and bicycle use, please contact a regional protected areas office.



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Environment and Labour
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