

Into the Yukon Wilderness

What you need to know about traveling safely and gently through the Yukon Wilderness



Includes:

- No-trace checklist
- Wilderness safety
- Bear safety
- Fishing, hunting and firearms
- Wildlife parts and products
- First Nation lands

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Welcome to Canada's Yukon. You've come a long way to see the land that inspired Robert Service and Jack London. And now you're getting ready to step into the wilderness they described so well.

You're going to be a long way from help, so it's important that you bring along the right gear. And if you run into any difficulties, you'll have to rely on your own judgment, just like the characters Service and London wrote about. In many ways, your wilderness travels will be similar to the journeys of the old-time prospectors, trappers and First Nation peoples. But there are some important differences.

Jack London didn't need a licence to fish or hunt. You do. You'll also have to follow the laws that apply to fishing, hunting and using the land. And you'll be expected to travel through the backcountry leaving few signs of your passage. If you do these things you'll earn the respect and appreciation of the people who call this land home.

So go ahead and plan the wilderness journey you've been dreaming about. Use this booklet as a starting point. Then visit bookstores, outdoor stores and libraries to find more information about wilderness trip planning.

If you're considering a guided trip, you can find a list of wilderness tourism operators in the Yukon Vacation Guide available at Visitor Reception Centres and on the Internet (www.touryukon.com).

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Copies of this publication can be obtained by contacting:

*Yukon Department of Environment
Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 2C6
Phone (867) 667-5648. Fax (867) 393-6223.*

Wilderness Safety

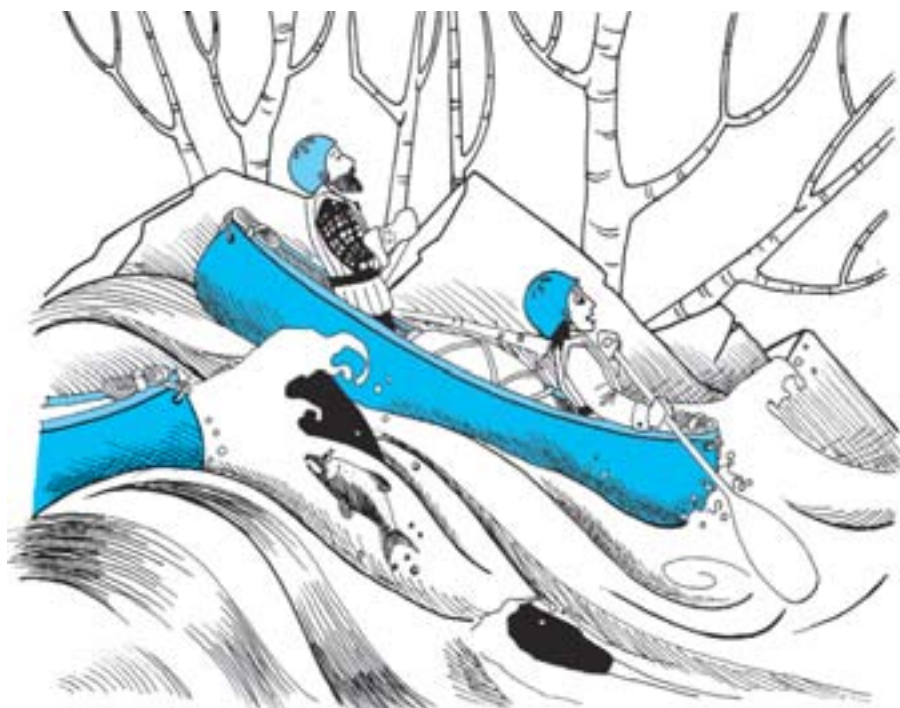
In most cases your backcountry trip will take you far from help and rescue. So you must be prepared to travel safely and handle any emergencies on your own.

This section will help determine whether or not you are prepared for wilderness safety. It is your responsibility, however, to ensure that you have the necessary skills, experience and equipment to have an enjoyable, injury-free adventure.

If you have any doubts about your abilities, consider a guided trip. There are many licensed wilderness guiding companies that can provide a safe, memorable experience. Check the Tourism Yukon website for more information (www.touryukon.com).

Ensure you have the necessary backcountry skills

If you start a river trip or other expedition with virtually no skills or experience, you're putting yourself and other members of your party at risk. The best thing to do is take a course in outdoor recreation skills, or learn from an experienced friend, before starting your trip. Outdoor recreation courses not only give you confidence, they also provide an opportunity to meet other responsible backcountry travellers. You can find out about these courses by contacting your local outdoor club.





If you are going on any type of wilderness trip you need to be prepared for:

- adverse weather conditions, and
- potentially dangerous wildlife encounters.

If your trip involves any type of boat you need to have the required safety gear in working condition. For more information call the Boating Safety Infoline (1-800-267-6687) or visit the Canadian Coast Guard website (www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca).

If your trip involves river paddling you need to know how to:

- deal with rapids, log jams and sweepers,
- prepare your craft for whitewater, and
- perform basic river rescues.

You also need to carry the appropriate rescue gear and life jackets to fit all members of your party.

If your trip involves skiing or snow-mobiling you need to know how to:

- identify high-risk avalanche areas
- minimize your risk in these areas, and
- conduct a rescue.

The best way to learn these skills is to take an avalanche training course. You should know that there are no avalanche reports for the Yukon wilderness. Once out there, you are on your own.

If your trip involves hiking you need to know how to:

- use a compass,
- make hazardous stream crossings, and
- negotiate terrain obstacles such as steep ridges, boggy areas and hummocky ground.

Check beforehand

There are very few marked trails or boating routes in the Yukon. And you won't find warning signs before rapids, treacherous landscape features, or other hazards. So checking ahead of time may save your life.

To check ahead of time:

- pick up a guidebook for your route at a Yukon bookstore,
- buy the topographic maps for your travel route ahead of time, because there is no guarantee that all maps will be available at local vendors. Maps can be obtained from vendors across Canada and in other countries. For an up-to-date list, check the Canada Geomatics dealer website (maps.nrcan.gc.ca/cmo/index.html).
- talk to someone who has already travelled the route. Staff at Visitor Reception Centres or Environment Yukon offices may be able to help.

Prepare for medical emergencies

Being prepared to treat injuries and illnesses is one of the basics of wilderness safety. Since you never know who will need care, all members should have these skills.

St. John's Ambulance and Red Cross are two organizations offering first aid courses, including basic wilderness first aid training. Private companies offer advanced or specialized wilderness first aid courses if you desire them. Check with your local recreation and safety organizations for contact numbers and addresses.

To prepare for medical emergencies:

- be aware of each member's allergies, health problems or medical conditions, and ensure you have the equipment and skills to deal with them,

- ensure that your first aid kit is waterproof, adequate for wilderness situations, and includes a wilderness first aid book,
- be prepared to treat stings and insect bites (some insect bites can cause strong reactions in those who have never been bitten),
- know how to prevent, identify and treat hypothermia, and
- ensure that your group has adequate health insurance to cover medical treatment in the Yukon.

Prepare for rescue if necessary

If you follow the basics of wilderness safety, chances are you won't need to be rescued. But if a rescue is required, to make sure it goes smoothly:

- let someone know about your travel route, schedule, the number of people in your party and the color of tents, backpacks and other equipment so they can alert the authorities if you don't return as planned (you can put all of this information on a *Trip Checklist and Sign Out* form, available from the RCMP).
- carry signaling equipment such as an emergency personal locator beacon (EPLB), satellite phone, vhf or HF radio, signal mirror, whistle and flares (if you carry an EPLB, you should know that once you turn it on, rescue efforts begin immediately and thousands of person-hours and dollars may be involved),

- obtain insurance to cover a rescue because, depending on the circumstances, you may have to pay all or part of rescue costs,
- learn about the international distress signals for wilderness situations, and
- be aware that solo travelling means there will be no one to go for help if you are injured or ill, and travelling with one partner means the victim may have to be left alone while the partner goes for help.

For more information

For more information about wilderness safety consult your local library or search the Internet.



Bear Safety

Travelling in the Yukon wilderness involves certain risks, including the possibility of a bear attack. Although the actual danger from bears may be small, it is real. The best defence is a cool head armed with good knowledge of bear ecology and behaviour.

- Consider bringing a can of bear spray. If you do, learn how to use it.

Plan ahead

Before you start your trip...

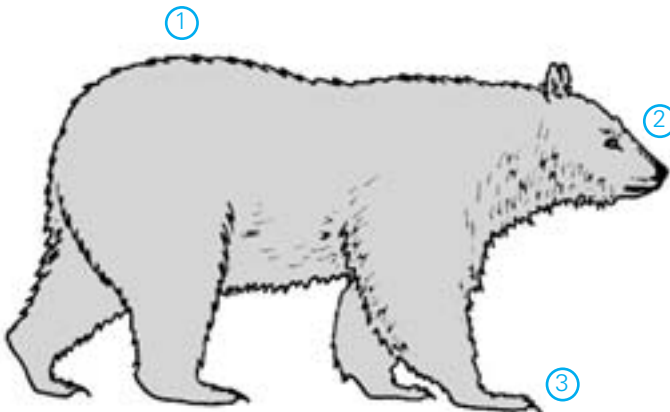
- Read up on the natural history and behaviour of bears.
- Learn how to identify bear sign.
- Learn about bear safety, from this booklet and other sources.
- Take a first aid course.
- Learn about the area you'll be travelling through.
- Try to anticipate the most likely problems.

Take these precautions

Don't surprise a bear

- Choose travel routes with good visibility where possible.
- Stay alert and look ahead for bears.
- Approach thickets from upwind if possible.
- Make noise to let bears know you're coming.
- Travel in groups.
- Avoid travelling at night.

Is it a black bear?



1. Highest point of back is over hind legs.
2. In profile, muzzle is straight and long.
3. Front claws are dark coloured, relatively short and well curved.

- Choose a campsite well away from wildlife trails, human travel routes and areas with heavy bear signs or foods.

Don't crowd a bear

- Don't approach a bear for a closer look or a better photo. Use binoculars or a telephoto lens.

Don't attract a bear

- Never feed a bear.
- Don't bring greasy, smelly foods like bacon or canned fish.
- Pack your food in airtight containers such as zip-lock bags or hard plastic boxes.
- Thoroughly burn your garbage or pack it out in airtight containers.
- At night, move the food away from your tent—100 m (110 yd.) or more. Put it up in a tree if you can.
- Don't bring food or cosmetics into your tent.
- If you catch a fish, clean it far from camp and toss the guts in the water.

If you see a bear...

Stay calm. Stop and assess the situation. Don't run, crouch down or play dead too soon.

If the bear is unaware of you...

- Avoid it if possible. Leave the area, detour around the bear, or wait it out.
- If you can't avoid the bear, gently alert it to your presence by moving upwind, waving your arms, and calling out in a calm voice.

If the bear approaches you or you surprise it...

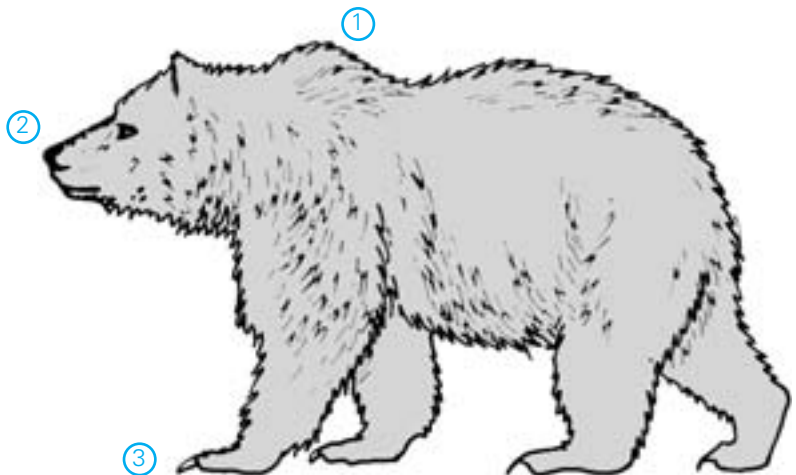
- Don't run.
- Talk in a calm voice.
- Slowly back away in the direction from which you came.
- If the bear keeps following you, stand your ground.
- Group together to present a stronger front.
- Remain firm but non-threatening as you give the bear time to think things over.

Or a grizzly bear?

1. Highest point of back is over the shoulders.

2. In profile, brow gives face a dished or concave look.

3. Front claws are light coloured, 10 cm long or longer and slightly curved.



- If you're carrying bear spray, get it in your hand, point the nozzle away from you, and check the wind direction to make sure the spray doesn't blow back on you.
- Try to figure out if the bear is acting in self-defence or if it's seeking food. **If it's a grizzly that you've surprised at close range, or is accompanied by cubs, or has a carcass near by, it's probably attacking in self-defence. If it's a black bear, it's probably seeking food.**

If the bear attacks...

An encounter is considered an **attack** only when the bear contacts you.

If the bear attacks, you have two choices: play dead or fight back. The right choice depends on whether the bear is acting in self-defence or seeking food.

Play dead

- If the bear seems to be attacking in self-defence, the best thing to do is play dead so the bear no longer feels threatened.
- Don't play dead before the bear contacts you — especially when a bear is approaching at a distance — or you may actually encourage the bear to attack.
- Play dead by dropping to the ground, face down, hands clasped tightly over the back of your neck, and legs slightly apart to prevent the bear from rolling you. Keeping your backpack on may help protect you.
- If playing dead works the bear will make brief contact with you, then will leave when it's convinced you're not dangerous. In this case, play dead as long as possible and don't move until the bear leaves the area.

Fight back

You should fight back if you are **attacked** by:

- any black bear,
- any grizzly that stalks, or attacks in circumstances that do not involve cubs, a carcass, or surprise at close range, or
- any bear that breaks into a tent or building.

These bears are motivated by food rather than self-defence. You need to fight back with all your energy with whatever you have. Kick, punch or hit the bear with a rock, chunk of wood or whatever is handy. A bear's nose is a good place to strike.

Using bear spray

If a bear approaches slowly or follows at a distance, fire two or three short bursts of spray between you and the bear while you continue backing away. The spray will create a cloud of deterrent which may stop the bear. But make sure you have enough left to spray the bear in the face at short distance if it keeps coming.

If a bear is charging, stand your ground, fire a couple of short bursts to create a cloud in front of you, then save remaining spray for use at close range if necessary.

For more information

Contact an Environment Yukon office for more information about bears.

Fishing, Hunting and Firearms

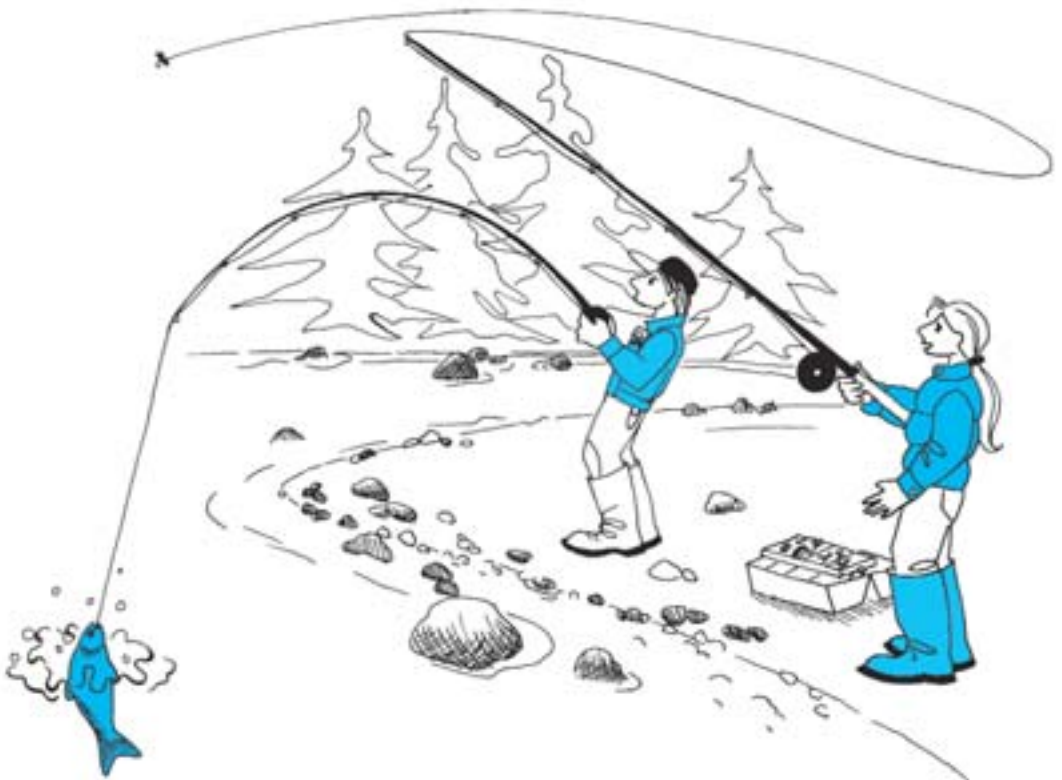
Fishing at a glance

You need a valid Yukon Angling Licence if you want to fish in the Yukon. A Yukon Angling Licence entitles you to fish for all species except salmon. To fish for salmon, you also need a Salmon Conservation Catch Card.

When you buy your licence you will receive a copy of the *Yukon Fishing Regulations Summary*. The regulation booklet is available in English, French and German,

and includes illustrations of all Yukon fish species. You must follow the catch limits and all other regulations described in the booklet. You can fish with a rod, line and hook only. All other methods of taking fish are unlawful without a permit.

Angling licences are available at Environment Yukon offices, Department of Fisheries and Oceans offices, and most highway lodges, sporting goods stores and convenience stores throughout the Yukon.



Hunting at a glance

As a non-resident of the Yukon, the only animals you can hunt on your own in the summer, without a licensed guide, are snowshoe hares, ground squirrels and porcupines. In the fall, after September 1, you can also hunt grouse, ptarmigan and waterfowl. You can see that hunting is not going to be a big part of your experience if you are on a summer wilderness trip.

Small game

You must have a valid licence to hunt small game such as snowshoe hares, ground squirrels, porcupine, grouse and ptarmigan. Small game hunting licences are available at Environment Yukon offices, the main Yukon government building in Whitehorse and selected sporting goods stores. You'll receive a copy of the *Yukon Hunting Regulations Summary* when you purchase a licence.

Migratory birds

You must have a valid permit to hunt migratory birds such as ducks and geese. Migratory bird hunting permits are available at postal outlets throughout the Yukon. You will receive a copy of the migratory bird

hunting regulations when you obtain your permit. Open season for most migratory birds runs from September 1 to October 31.

Big game

You cannot hunt big game animals in the Yukon unless you are outfitted by a licensed outfitter and accompanied by a licensed big game guide. Big game animals include moose, caribou, mountain sheep, mountain goat, black bear, grizzly bear, bison, wolf, coyote and wolverine.

For a list of big game outfitters contact the Yukon Outfitters Association at B4-302 Steele St, Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C5, (867) 668-4118, www.yukonoutfitters.net. For more information about big game hunting, contact an Environment Yukon office.

Firearms at a glance

A firearm is not a necessary piece of equipment for a Yukon wilderness journey. In fact most Yukon residents and visitors do not carry a firearm on their canoe trips and hiking trips. It's a heavy item, you can't use it to "live off the land" and, in the hands of someone who is not well-trained in its use, it's a lethal accident waiting to happen. Firearms are not allowed inside Kluane, Ivvavik and Vuntut National Parks.

If you decide to bring a firearm for hunting, or for bear protection (it's a personal choice), you will have to follow Canada's strict firearm control laws including the following:

- When not in use a firearm must be unloaded and separate from the ammunition. It must be stored in a locked container, OR fitted with a trigger lock, OR have the bolt removed. Ammunition must be stored separate from the firearm, unless both items are in a locked container. (These storage laws do not apply when you are in a remote wilderness location.)

**Respect the animal.
Take only what you need.
Use all that you take.**

"When you kill something, the animal gives its life for you. So you've got to give thanks to the great spirit. Something had to die for you to continue with your life. That's the way I look at it."

Art Johns,
Carcross-Tagish First Nation

- Firearms must always be transported unloaded. When left in a vehicle they must be locked in the trunk, if there is one, or kept out of sight in the locked vehicle. If the vehicle cannot be locked someone must be with the firearm. In a remote wilderness area, a firearm can be left unattended as long as it is out of sight and trigger locked. If it is needed for predator control, it does not have to be trigger locked.

- The laws described here apply to hunting rifles and shotguns only. Hand guns and other restricted weapons are subject to additional laws.

For more information call the *Canadian Firearms Centre* toll free at 1-800-731-4000.

Wildlife Parts and Products

Wildlife parts include antlers, hides, claws, teeth, meat and any other part of a wildlife carcass.

Wildlife products include carvings, tanned hides, taxidermy products and any other items made from wildlife parts.

The buying and selling of these items, and their export from the Yukon, is regulated by wildlife conservation laws.

Buying them

When you buy a wildlife part or product, you'll need to get some kind of paper work to show where it came from. If you don't have this paper, the item may be seized or you may be refused an export permit. When you buy from a licensed gift shop or taxidermist they'll give you a receipt which is all you need. If you want to buy a wildlife part or product from someone who is not a commercial dealer, ask them to get a permit for the sale, or offer to get one yourself. The sale is not legal unless one of you has a permit.

Finding them

If you want to keep cast off antlers or any part of a wildlife carcass you find, you must bring the item to an Environment Yukon office and ask for a permit to keep it. The officer will ask a few questions and if everything is in order, a permit will be issued.

Taking them out of the Yukon

You must get an export permit from an Environment Yukon office before you take **any** wildlife parts or products out of the Yukon. A special CITES permit is needed to take out of Canada any part of the following species: grizzly bear, polar bear, black bear, wood bison, wolf, lynx or otter. Some countries, such as Germany, require import permits for these species.

No-Trace Checklist

Keeping the Yukon green and pristine

This section will help you leave little or no trace of your travels through the backcountry. Our shared goal is to preserve high quality Yukon wilderness experiences for visitors and residents alike.

If you are new to the Yukon or to wilderness travel, this guide will start you on the right track. But even a well-seasoned traveller will find useful up-to-date information. Adopting no-trace practices in the wilderness will help keep the Yukon green and pristine.

What does impact mean?

The most obvious impact is garbage left in the wilderness. Another is the disturbed ground and damaged vegetation caused by too many people camping or travelling through an area. One impact that is often overlooked is the altered behaviour of wildlife that have been attracted by the food humans carry into the backcountry, and the waste they leave behind.

Commercial wilderness tourism operators must follow special regulations applying to no-trace wilderness travel and waste disposal (*Yukon Wilderness Tourism Licensing Act*). For more information, contact the Registrar. Phone (867) 667-5648. Fax (867) 393-6223.

While some impacts involve damage to ecosystems, others damage the aesthetics of the wilderness experience. Toilet paper blown onto a riverside shrub may have little environmental impact, but it can destroy the pleasure of wilderness travel.

Linking to the North American no-trace movement

This checklist is one of many no-trace guides produced by various organizations and governments throughout North America. Some of the content is unique to the Yukon and is based on suggestions from local backcountry travellers. The general messages, however, are consistent with ideas promoted in other no-trace literature.

The Yukon Department of Environment has adopted the no-trace principles promoted by LNT Inc., one of North America's most active proponents of no-trace practices. Those principles are reflected in the headings used in this checklist.

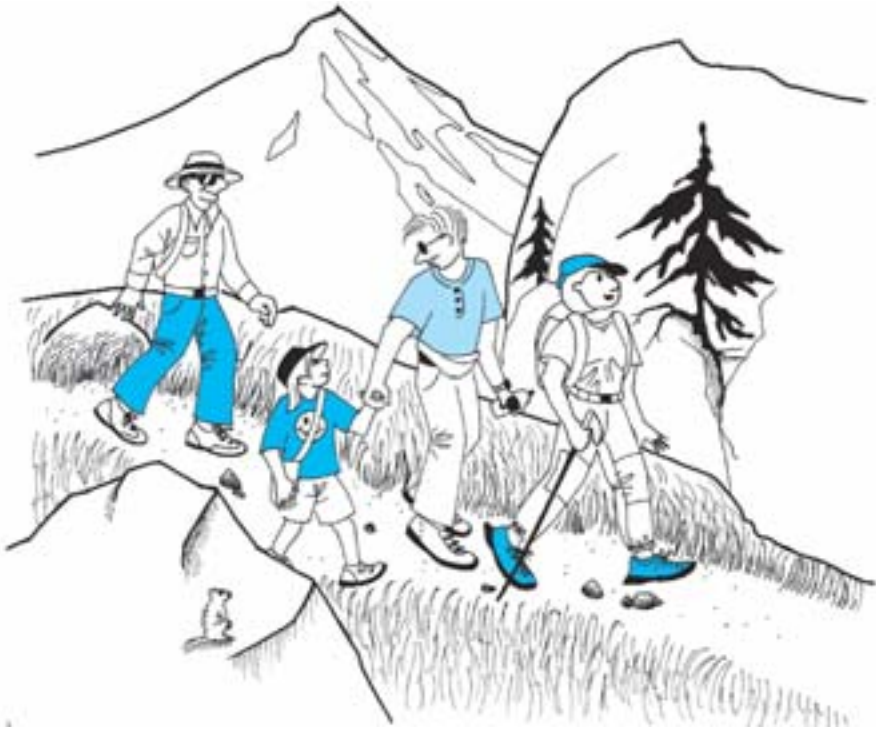
No-trace checklist

1. Plan to leave no trace

You probably plan your trip well in advance. Planning to leave no trace is one step in the process. Many of these techniques are common sense; the rest will become habit with practice.

- Larger groups have larger impacts so plan on a small group size. Two to six careful people is ideal. If you can break a large group into smaller, independent groups that are well-separated, you will reduce the overall impact.
- Get together well ahead of your trip so that your entire group can discuss and plan no-trace techniques.
- Meals should be planned so that you have enough food but little waste. Eliminating bulky packaging reduces garbage. Select items that aren't overpackaged. Repackaging in odour-reducing plastic bags or other airtight containers can reduce the weight and size of your pack, and lessen wildlife-attracting odours.
- Avoid bringing smelly, easily-spoiled foods that will be attractive to scavengers. This includes fresh meat, fish and seafood. Small one-meal cans of such food are an option. Plan to burn the cans and then pack them out and deposit them at your nearest recycling centre. (A list of recycling centres is available at Environment Yukon offices.)
- Learn as much as you can about the region's wildlife so you will know how to minimize potential impacts. The Yukon Wildlife Viewing Program (867-667-8291) is a good source of information. You can also check libraries and the Internet.
- Read the appropriate sections of this booklet to find out about the laws that apply to hunting, fishing and using First Nations lands.
- Choose travel and camping gear carefully, for both safety and minimal impact. Try to plan for all conditions and environments that you may experience.
- Use topographical maps to help you plan low-impact travel routes and campsites. Usually, 1:50,000 or 1:250,000 scale maps are best.





- Plan to pack a stove and enough fuel for reliable heat and minimum impact. If you do plan on a campfire, take a sack for a mound fire or carry a firepan.
- Bring an appropriate container if you decide to pack out your own feces.

2. Camp and travel on durable surfaces

When hiking

For the hiker, most considerations relate to keeping ground vegetation healthy and intact so that plants recover quickly.

- Use existing trails to avoid creating new impacts. If the trail is used by wildlife, be alert. Read the bear safety section in this booklet for more information.
- Hike single file to prevent widening the trail.
- Where there are no trails, select a route over durable terrain such as gravel creek beds, sandy or rocky areas, or grassy

vegetation. Try to avoid steep, loose slopes and wet terrain. If you must walk across vegetated areas, spread out to avoid creating new trails.

- In winter, snow and ice will help ensure your tracks are gone after the next snowfall.

When camping

Even an overnight stop can leave a lasting impression on the land and the next wilderness enthusiast. Keep the following suggestions in mind.

- Look for a campsite early so you can be selective.
- Try to choose sites that are already impacted. If possible, leave the site cleaner than it was when you arrived. Cleaning up, reducing the number of fire circles, and encouraging regrowth in damaged spots all help make the site better for the next visitor.

- When choosing a new campsite, look for durable terrain. Bare rock, sand, fine gravel, snow and ice are the most forgiving surfaces. Plants that can best sustain the impact of camping are generally those living on coarse-grained, well-drained, fairly level soils. A few examples are grasses, kinnikinnik, arctic willow and mountain avens.
- When travelling by water, consider camping on gravelbars or sandbars. Spring floods will purge these sites so that even slight traces of your camp will be removed. But remember, heavy rains can make some rivers rise quickly and dramatically because landscapes containing permafrost or exposed bedrock cannot absorb much runoff.
- Try to keep access routes to water and other commonly used places as inconspicuous as possible. Vary your route between such areas. Wearing light runners in camp will also help to minimize impact.

3. Pack in, pack out

Garbage is a major concern in the backcountry. But there are ways to dispose of virtually everything.

- Burn paper garbage such as toilet paper, pads and tampons to reduce odours that attract animals. Sift through the campfire ashes and pack out anything that remains.
- Pack out any garbage or toilet paper that you don't burn. Double- or triple-bag it to reduce odours. An airtight, reusable garbage container may be a better option.
- Don't bury garbage. Scavenging wildlife will dig it up, spread it around, and

perhaps suffer injury or death from it. Pack it out.

- Make a final sweep before you leave camp. Small items such as twist ties or bits of plastic are easy to overlook.

4. Properly dispose of what you can't pack out

If you can't pack it out, use the following strategies to reduce unsightliness and impacts on wildlife.

Wastewater and waste food

- Wash your dishes in a container, then drain the dishwater into a hole well away from tents and standing water. Remember to refill the hole with soil before you leave. Use a small strainer to catch food particles, which can then be packed out or burned. These steps can help reduce food odours, prevent contamination of water supplies, and avoid unsightly scraps washing up on shorelines.
- You can also get rid of strained wastewater in a swift-flowing river. Fling it far out into the current to ensure dilution. This is a better option than using a hole in the ground because it completely eliminates food odours.



Garbage/Litter

Dropping litter in the backcountry is an offence under the Yukon *Environment Act*.



- Another way to reduce food odours in camp is to have a meal stop well before you camp. By keeping cooking odours, spilled food and dishwater well away from your campsite, you can avoid attracting scavenging wildlife.
- Avoid or minimize the use of soaps and shampoos. Biodegradable products are essential. Keep well away from water to avoid contaminating an otherwise pure lake or stream.

Human waste

- Your toilet should be at least 60 m (66 yd.) away from any body of water; even further if you are camped on a floodplain. Feces can be disposed in a shallow, 15 cm (6 in.) cathole dug in the soil with the heel of your boot or a small trowel. Add surface soil and stir with a stick to encourage decomposition. Use the remaining soil you have dug out to cover things afterwards. Pick a site well away from any other catholes and far from any campsite.

- In the North, bacterial action is much slower than in more southerly climates. Your organic garbage and human waste can take a long time to decompose.
- Permafrost will slow decomposition. Try to choose toilet sites where permafrost is well below the surface, or absent, and where there is some depth of true soil. South-facing, open slopes are a good choice.
- Consider stopping for bowel movements along your travel route rather than at your campsite. This will help reduce impacts at popular campsites.
- Used toilet paper should either be put in a paper bag and burned in a campfire or packed out with your other garbage. Naturally decomposing alternatives such as moss, leaves, snow and grass may be better than paper.
- If your group is large and plans to remain in one area for an extended time, dig a latrine or pack out your waste. The latrine should be approximately 30 cm (1 ft.) deep. Throwing earth into it after each use will help decomposition and reduce odors. Better still, keep your group small, and change campsites on a daily basis.





5. Leave what you find

Historic artefacts

- Historic artefacts, archaeological specimens, or fossils must be left undisturbed. It is unlawful to collect such items without a valid permit from the Yukon Heritage Branch. You must report an accidental discovery or unearthing of historic sites or objects to the Heritage Resources Branch, or to the appropriate First Nation if the find is on First Nation land. For more information, contact the Heritage Resources Branch at (867) 667-5386, or fax (867) 667-8023. You can also call 1-800-661-0408 toll free from anywhere inside the Yukon.

Respecting wildlife

- Wildlife viewing is one of the thrills of backcountry travel. Give animals ample space and distance and remain quiet and still to prolong your viewing opportunities and minimize the animal's stress.
- Binoculars, scopes, and telephoto lenses (300mm or more) are the best tools for observing wildlife. They allow you to watch an animal's natural behaviour from a safe distance. If the animal notices you,

you are probably too close and causing undue stress. And you may be putting yourself at risk.

- Don't camp where there are signs of obvious wildlife use such as nesting, denning, feeding or rutting sites.
- To reduce potential bear encounters, try to set up your campsite so that cooking and food storage areas are at least 100 m (110 yd.) downwind of your tent. For more information read the bear safety section of this booklet.
- Don't follow fleeing or retreating wildlife. You may be separating a mother from her young, depleting the animal's energy reserves and putting yourself in a dangerous situation.

Cutting trees

The only reason you may cut or damage a tree without a valid timber cutting permit is to build a campfire. Only dry/dead trees (standing or down) may be used.

- Be especially wary of what seem to be orphaned young. In all likelihood, the mother is nearby. Any attempts to help could provoke an attack from the mother. Under most circumstances, it is best to let nature take its course.
- Learn behavioral characteristics of wildlife you expect to encounter. Knowing signs of aggressive behaviour, fear, and avoidance actions can help you respond appropriately and limit your impact on even the smallest creature.

Leave it natural

- Cutting trees and building tables, shelters or other structures will diminish the next visitor's wilderness experience.

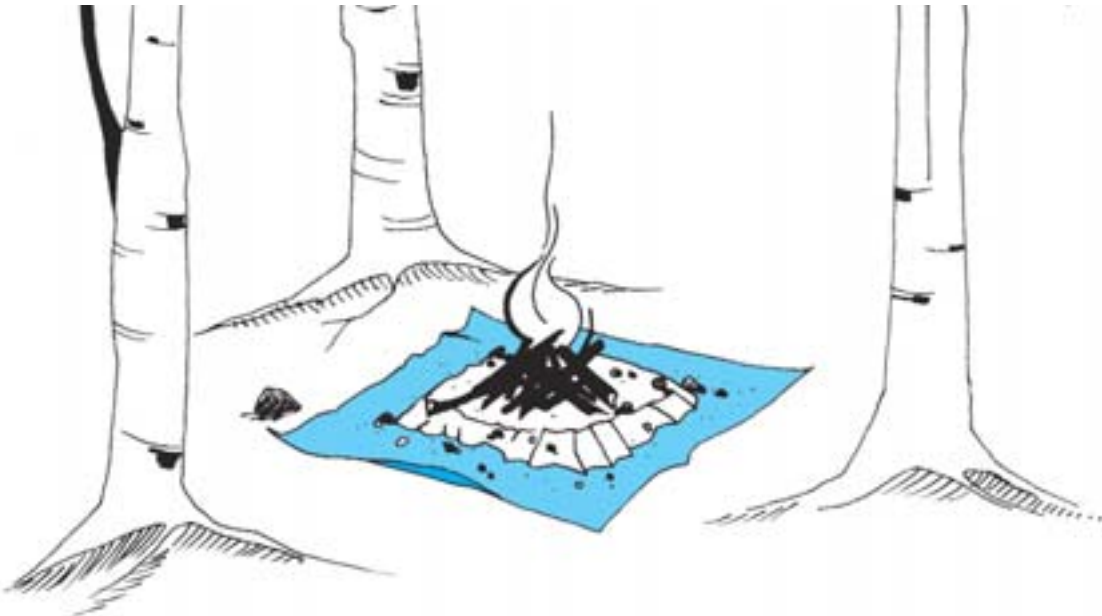
6. Use stoves and small campfires

The Yukon has abundant firewood in many places. But certain areas have lost part of that wilderness feeling because of blackened circles of rocks and other campfire-related debris.

Campfires also pose a risk of starting forest fires. Many fires have been started by travellers who let their campfire get out of hand. Sparks, or fires that have spread underground through peat or roots can smolder for days, weeks or months before erupting.

There are many types of inexpensive, lightweight, efficient and reliable backpacking stoves that can eliminate the need for campfires. Always carry one of these stoves so that you will have the option. If it is safe to have a campfire, however, consider the following suggestions.

- Use an existing fire circle. If there is more than one circle, eliminate the others if you can.
- Campfires built directly on the ground will leave lasting scars. Fire destroys surface vegetation and sterilizes the soil. When considering whether or not to build a fire, ask yourself if it is necessary and what effect it will have.





- If you choose to build a campfire on an undisturbed site, consider using a firepan or making a mound fire. This is done by piling sand or gravel from a disturbed site on a large tarp. Make the pile about 20 cm (8 in.) thick to prevent the heat from destroying underlying vegetation. When finished, put the sand or gravel back where it came from.
- Use only dead wood, preferably from fallen trees. The smallest, dead, dry branches from a spruce tree are great fire starters. Small pieces of dead, dry willow burn hot, with mild smoke. Collect only what you need, keep the fire small, and take your wood from different locations. Sawcuts on stumps are sure signs that someone has been there before, so be discrete if you do any sawing.
- Burn wood down to ash before extinguishing your fire, if time permits. If not, soak the pieces until cold to the touch. Stir and drench the site until you feel no hot spots with your hand. Collect any refuse, then scatter the ashes and charred wood.
- Sandbars and gravelbars are ideal campfire sites if there is no flood threat.

The remaining indications of your campfire will be washed away during high-water periods. You may still wish to use a mound fire or firepan set upon rocks to minimize your impact on vegetation.

- Always use a stove in areas where fires are prohibited, where a fire hazard exists, or where there is little dead wood available.
- A winter campfire can be a true no-trace fire if you build it on top of deep snow or ice. If small, the fire may not even reach ground level before its purpose is fulfilled. And the remaining ash you have scattered will be covered by new snow in a few days.





7. Be considerate

Showing consideration for wilderness residents and other travellers helps make everyone's journey more enjoyable. Noise, and even the sight of brightly-coloured tents and clothing can detract from a wilderness experience. On the other hand, in some situations making noise will help avoid bear encounters. Brightly-colored gear may also be important in a rescue or an air pickup. So, appropriate behaviour or gear depends on the circumstances. The key is to keep others in mind when planning and travelling.

Thanks for thinking no-trace

By practicing no-trace techniques, you are setting an excellent example for others who have yet to learn about such techniques. Your example, and your willingness to share your knowledge, may help accelerate the learning process.

Many excellent publications are available to provide a more comprehensive understanding of no-trace practices. Check your library, bookstore, or the Internet, using such key words as *leave no trace*, *minimum impact camping*, and *recreational impact*. One of the most comprehensive sites is the LNT Inc. website (www.lnt.org). You can also check our own departmental website (www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca).

For more information

Contact an Environment Yukon office or call Yukon Parks at (867) 667-5648.

Wilderness cabins

Most of the cabins you'll find in the backcountry belong to licensed trappers who use them during the winter trapping season. Please do not disturb these cabins or any traps or equipment you find in wilderness areas. Chances are, someone is counting on that cabin being in good shape, and the equipment being in place, when winter returns.

You cannot go out into the wilderness and build your own cabin unless you own the land.

First Nation Lands

Locating First Nation Settlement Lands

First Nation Settlement Lands are parcels of land located within each First Nation's Traditional Territory. Settlement Land can be designated Developed or Undeveloped. The general right of access (outlined below) applies on **Undeveloped Land only**. It is your responsibility to determine the status of the land you wish to access.

Travelling and camping on Undeveloped Settlement Lands

Your rights

You have the right to enter, cross and stay for a reasonable period of time on Undeveloped Lands for non-commercial recreation, including camping and fishing, subject to the responsibilities described below.

Your responsibilities

When using Undeveloped Lands, you must NOT:

- Damage the land or structures
- Interfere with the use and enjoyment of the land by the First Nation, or

- Commit acts of mischief.

A person who does any of these things is considered to be a trespasser.

Waterfront Right-of-way

A waterfront right-of-way exists from the high water mark to a distance of 30 metres inland, along most navigable waterways, including those beside or within Settlement Lands. You have the right to stop-over, camp and use dead wood to make campfires within a waterfront right-of-way.

Be aware, however, that some Settlement Lands along rivers extend through what would otherwise be the waterfront right-of-way, and may be closed to public camping and fishing.

For more information

To find out where First Nation Settlement Lands are located, and whether they are designated Developed or Undeveloped, visit an Environment Yukon office or the First Nation office in the Traditional Territory through which you will be travelling to view the relevant maps.

Hunting on First Nation Settlement Lands

Some First Nation Settlement Lands are closed to public hunting without proof of consent from the First Nation. If you plan to hunt any type of wildlife in the Yukon you must find out where these lands are located. The larger blocks of First Nation land closed to public hunting are marked on maps in the *Yukon Hunting Regulations Summary* booklet available at Environment Yukon offices. Smaller blocks are marked on detailed maps which can be viewed at Environment Yukon offices or First Nation offices.



Environment Yukon Offices

Whitehorse District

10 Burns Road
Box 2703
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6
Phone (867) 667-5221
Fax (867) 393-6206

Dawson City District

Dawson City Museum, 2nd flr
Box 600
Dawson City, YT Y0B 1G0
Phone (867) 993-5492
Fax (867) 993-6003

Faro District

In the Solar Complex, Campbell St.
Box 98
Faro, YT Y0B 1K0
Phone (867) 994-2862
Fax (867) 994-3433

Haines Junction District

109 Pringle Street
Box 5429
Haines Junction, YT Y0B 1L0
Phone (867) 634-2247
Fax (867) 634-2010

Mayo District

YTG Admin. Bldg, Centre St.
Box 40
Mayo, YT Y0B 1M0
Phone (867) 996-2202
Fax (867) 996-2916

Ross River District


Across from the Dena General Store
General Delivery
Ross River, YT Y0B 1S0
Phone (867) 969-2202
Fax (867) 969-2610

Teslin District

Km 1246 Alaska Highway
Box 97
Teslin, YT Y0A 1B0
Phone (867) 390-2685
Fax (867) 390-2682

Watson Lake District

On Centennial Ave, across from
Home Hardware
Box 194
Watson Lake, YT Y0A 1C0
Phone (867) 536-7363
Fax (867) 536-7374



For further information

Toll-free (from within the Yukon)
1-800-661-0408

Email environmentyukon@gov.yk.ca

Web www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca

Visitor Reception Centres

Whitehorse

100 Hanson Street
Box 2703
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6
Phone (867) 667-3084
Fax (867) 393-6351

Beaver Creek

Across from the Westmark Inn
Phone (867) 862-7321
Fax (867) 862-7614

Carcross

In the old train station
Phone (867) 821-4431
Fax (867) 821-3006

Dawson City

At the corner of Front & King St.
Phone (867) 993-6449
Fax (867) 993-6449

Haines Junction

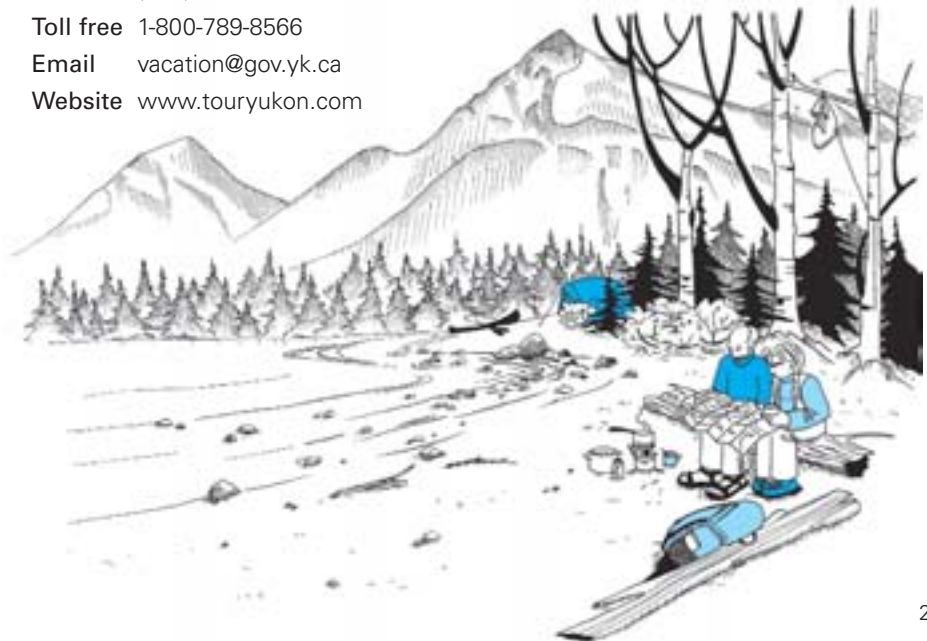
In the Kluane National Park
Visitor Centre
Phone (867) 634-2345
Fax (867) 634-7208

Watson Lake

At the junction of the Alaska
& Robert Campbell Hwys
Phone (867) 536-7469
Fax (867) 536-2003

For tourist information

Phone (867) 667-5340
Toll free 1-800-789-8566
Email vacation@gov.yk.ca
Website www.touryukon.com



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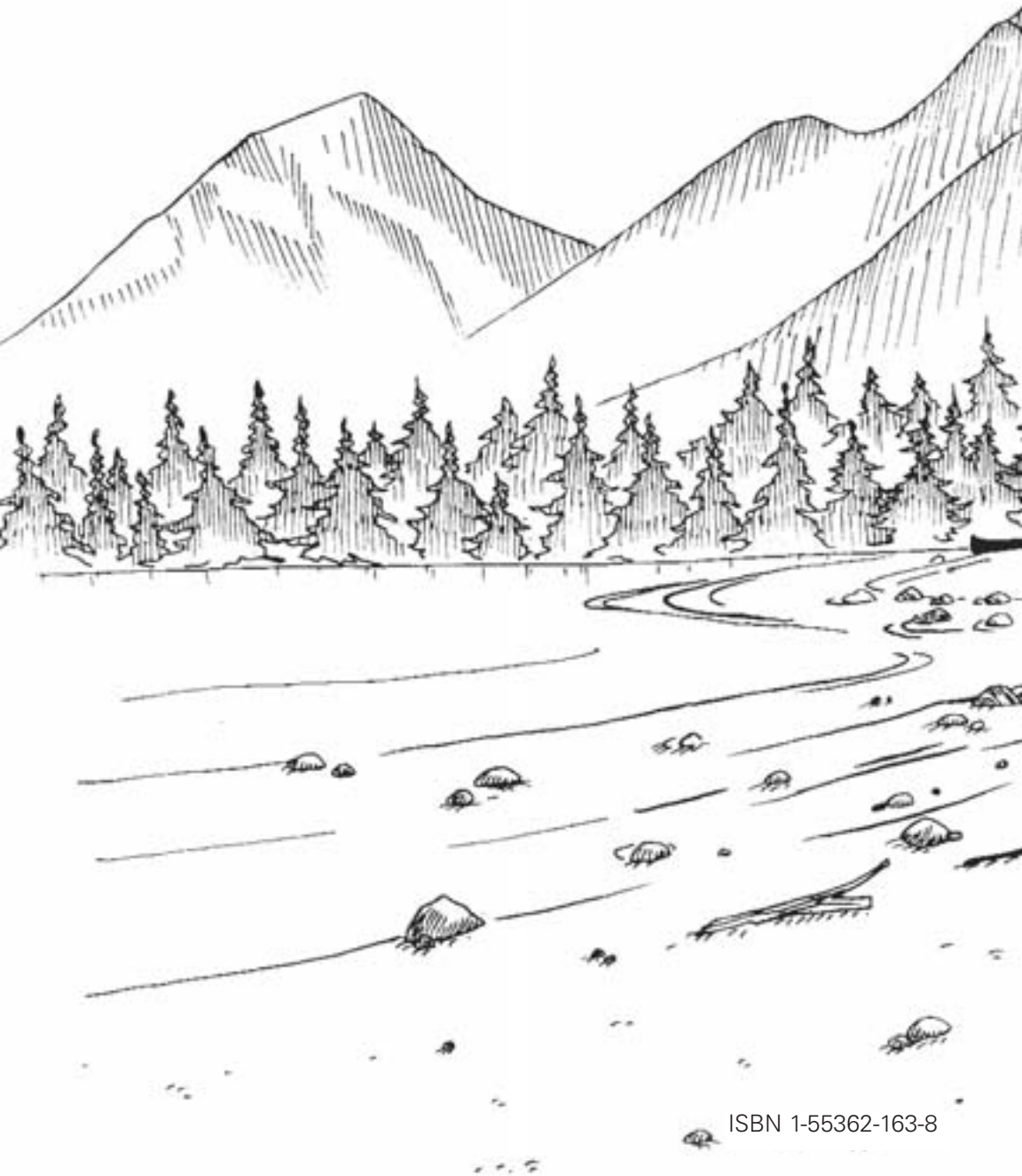
How you can help

If you see someone violating the hunting or fishing laws, don't confront them and risk an unpleasant reaction. That's our job. You can help by watching carefully and recording the facts including:

- date and time
- location
- number of people involved
- description of the people
- description of the vehicle and licence plate number

- details of the violation or activity

Please record this information in the space provided on the back of your hunting licence. When you reach a phone you can call a Conservation Officer or the TIP line at 1-800-661-0525 and report the details of the offence. You'll be helping the wildlife conservation effort and you may be eligible for a significant cash reward.



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