

The Strathcona Wilderness Institute Presents:

Leave No Trace Wilderness Ethics

There are 7 principles to help you “leave no trace”

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

CAMP AND TRAVEL ON DURABLE SURFACES

PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT

PROPERLY DISPOSE OF WHAT YOU CANNOT PACK OUT

MINIMIZE THE USE AND IMPACT OF FIRES

MINIMIZE NOISE AND VISUAL INTRUSION

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

1. PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Research the area
- Prepare your food
- Bring the right clothes
- Pack efficiently/lightly
- Leave contact info with a trusted friend

Research the area:

Questions to ask:

- “When was the last time a bear was spotted in this area?”
- “Are fires/fishing permitted?”
- “What kinds of animals might I encounter?”
- “Are there any hazards I should be aware of?”
- “Is there a beautiful lake to see while I am here?”

Places to ask:

- Visitors’ Centers- office personnel, pamphlets
- BC Parks website- pamphlets, maps
- Outdoor sports stores- office personnel, pamphlets, maps, guidebooks
- The Library- guidebooks for local areas
- Strathcona Contact Information- trip registration form

Prepare your food:

- *Pack light-Pack dried!* Food is one of the best places to reduce your pack weight. Avoid canned food, it contains a lot of water, and the can becomes waste. Avoid fresh fruit and vegetables as they contain too much water, and can be dried easily.
- *Battle dehydration!* Bring food that contain electrolytes (such as tomatoes) which help your body retain and use water while you exert yourself.
- *Don’t become a vegetarian on your trip!* If you normally eat meat, bring jerky. If you are a vegetarian, menu planning should be easy, as dried grains and greens are easy to find in grocery stores.
- *Find out how many calories you will burn kayaking (or whatever) and plan your meals accordingly.* The average hiker will need two pounds dried food per day.

- *Cater to your cravings!* Don't forget the salty and chocolate categories of food!
- *Leave the garbage at home!!* Repackage all your food into zip locks to avoid packing out excess trash or accidentally leaving garbage in the wilderness.

Bring the right clothes:

Three layer system: wicking, insulating, waterproof

- The purpose of the wicking layer is to wick the sweat away from your skin, and regulate your temperature. The best material for this purpose is polypropylene.
- The purpose of the waterproof layer is to keep you and your clothes dry. This layer must be breathable! If it is not breathable (rubber lined) you will get soaked with sweat from the other two layers. The best material for this is still Gore-Tex.
- The purpose of the insulating layer is to keep you warm. It is also easily added and removed as your body temperature rises and falls. The best materials for insulating are fleece and wool, but there are many other synthetics that will work as well.
- Never wear Cotton outdoors!!

Pack efficiently/lightly

- Only bring essentials. Take note of things that you bring but never use. Take them off your packing list for your next trip. (Binoculars, towel, soap, T-shirt, the 6th pair of socks, etc.)
- Stuff your clothes around the rest of your gear, so that all air space is filled. Don't fold or roll. Pack your food in your pot, sunscreen in your mug, etc. Stuff your stuff!
- Use a compression sack for your sleeping bag: this will scrunch it up, so shake it out when you get to camp.

Leave contact info with a trusted friend

Don't trust your safety to anyone's memory, write it all down!

Personal

- The color of your clothes
- The color of your tent fly is
- The trail name(s) you will be on
- What direction you will be traveling
- What time you will be out of the woods
- A brief description of what gear you have with you and the amount of food you'll be bringing
- Where you will be camping (all sites)

Group

- What level of first aid each group member has
- The names and numbers of all other group members
- Any medical considerations: John has diabetes, Amy has sprained her ankle in the past
- The level of experience of each group member of the activity being undertaken: John and Amy are advanced kayakers

2. CAMP AND TRAVEL ON DURABLE SURFACES

Travel on durable surfaces

- Plants at high elevation take hundreds of years to mature. Never step on plants to avoid mud...wear good boots and walk through the mud.
- Never cut switchbacks – this causes erosion
- Where there is no trail, walk on rocks and snow
- In high use areas walk on main trails, single file
- Always stay on the trail, even through mud!

Camp on Durable Surfaces

The most durable places to set up a tent are:

- Rocks
- Sand
- Snow
- Pine needles
- Established campsites
- Dry grasses

Places to avoid setting up your tent:

- In meadows
- On moist ground
- On vegetation
- On or near visible animal trails
- On fresh grasses

3. PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT!

Before you go:

- Remove wrappers and excess garbage
- Re package in labeled zip lock bags
- Pack only light, waterless foods (no cans!)
- Bring nuts and seeds that have been shelled at home

While you're out there:

- Cook only what you can eat, pack out leftovers
- Clean kitchen area thoroughly; no food scraps left!
- Nutshells, orange peels and all other organic materials brought in get packed back out
- Toilet paper is either burned or packed out in zip lock – Never buried!
- Keep trash in one piece: don't rip the corner off of that granola bar!

4. PROPERLY DISPOSE OF WHAT YOU CAN'T PACK OUT

Answering nature's call

The proper way to go to the "bathroom" in the wilderness will depend on where you are

At the beach:

- Use the inter-tidal zone (where the tide rises and falls) away from tidal pools
- In the mountains:
 - Dig a cat hole 6 inches deep, at least 75 metres away from any water source (streams, lakes, creeks, rivers etc.). Waste breaks down quickly in the first six inches of topsoil. Cover with the dirt you removed from the hole. Pack out toilet paper. Wash your hands by pouring water from a water bottle. Don't rinse your hands in a stream.

In the desert:

- You don't want to know. (Spread waste on a rock to sun dry and blow away.)

5. MINIMIZE THE USE AND IMPACT OF FIRES

Why no fires in parks?

Always bring a camp stove. Most Parks have a complete ban on fires. This is because at elevation, it takes 500 years to produce a three foot tall tree. If left to rot, the tree will return nutrients to the soil. If it is burned, there is a missing link in soil production. Deadwood is a vital part of the Alpine ecosystem.

Why is our campfire so small?

If you must have a fire, do so at low elevation (sea level). Keep your fire small to conserve wood. Remove all rocks to form a base on the sand. Burn all wood to ashes. Pour water over the ashes and stir until it's a grey soup. Replace rocks and sand as they were. Never burn a large log you can't burn down to ashes...charred wood is a sign of messy, wasteful campers.

6. MINIMIZE NOISE AND VISUAL INTRUSION

Minimize noise:

Travel in groups of six or less.

- Choose campsites away from lakeshores and water edges, as sound carries over water.
- The quieter you are as you travel, the more animals you will hear and see.
- Respect other campers right to enjoy the quiet and solitude of the outdoors: go to bed when darkness falls.

Minimize visual intrusion:

- The prepared outdoor enthusiast need not wear bright clothes in order to be rescued, but chooses instead to blend in with nature.
- Wear clothes that match the colors of nature; greens, browns and blues.
- Don't remove branches, set up stumps as benches or clear rocks from beneath your tent.
- If you must have a fire, gather deadwood (already on the ground) from outside your campsite. Removing all deadwood from an area leaves it looking unnatural
- Set up tents so they aren't visible from trails.

7. LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

Leave rocks, pine cones, flowers, feathers, shells and pieces of wood where you find them. Don't bring anything home that you didn't pack in.

This presentation brought to you by: The Strathcona Wilderness Institute

Check out our website: www.strathconapark.org/