

# The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace



The Back Country Horsemen of Washington are committed to their work on our trails and trailheads, their advocacy for the preservation of rights for stock use on the trails and for their commitment to teaching others how to

**“Make a Lasting Difference and yet, Leave No Trace”**



Twenty-five years ago, environmental advocates from the public, the outdoor industry and the land management community responded to a call to protect our natural lands and the Leave No Trace organization was born.

# Leave No Trace Outdoor Skills & Ethics

Nature has her own set of rules. Wilderness areas are among the few places on earth where we have agreed to allow nature, for the most part, to operate on her own terms.

Conserving our natural environment so it may be enjoyed by future generations is the responsibility of us all.



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# First Principle of Leave No Trace



leave no trace

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Successful trip planning requires knowledge of the area; equipment, food & clothing needed; weather conditions and trip expectations; and the temperament and experience of your stock

# Plan Ahead and Prepare



# Planning includes equipment needed to minimize horse impact in the backcountry

Key areas to consider:

Confining horses in camp

Portable Electric Fences

Grazing Restraints

Watering Horses

Use of Supplemental Feed

Saddle Hobbles

Highlines



# Second Principle of Leave No Trace



## Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces



# Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- **High Use Areas:**

- Concentrate activities
- Use existing trails and designated campsites
- Keep campsites small

- **Remote, Less Traveled Areas:**

- Spread out
- Take different paths
- Disperse tents and cooking activities
- Choose the most durable surfaces - rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow



## **Stay on trails -**

though you should take breaks off the trail on a durable surface like dry grass or sand

**Choose established campsites –  
a “hardened” site can tolerate a  
relatively large amount of use**

**Camp away from trails and water**

**Set up a simple, organized camp**

**Do not ditch around tents**

**Locate the kitchen in the most resistant location available**

**Use scrim as a ground cloth to allow moisture and air through, but buffers  
the grinding action caused by boot heels**

**Leave a clean camp – make an effort to leave it in a natural condition**

**Avoid fragile areas and areas where impact is just beginning – wet, boggy  
ground will not withstand your passing without considerable damage, nor will  
pristine areas**





# Third Principle of Leave No Trace

## Dispose of Waste Properly

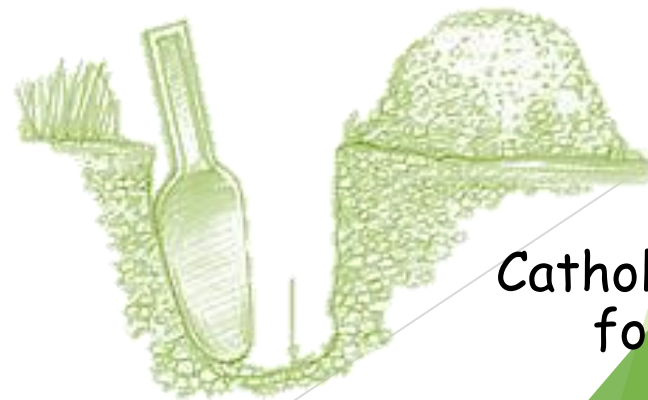
### Pack It In, Pack It Out!

Includes uneaten food

Spoiled food

#### **All trash (even trash from others)**

- ❖ Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails
- ❖ To wash your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwasher.



Catholes are recommended  
for most situations





## Fourth Principle of Leave No Trace



# Leave What You Find



## Why It Matters

Damaging, defacing, or removing objects and cultural artifacts deprives other visitors.

Building furniture or structures, trenching, and altering natural features spoil the wilderness.



People visit wildlands for many reasons, among them to explore nature's mysteries and surprises. When we leave rocks, shells, plants, antlers, feathers, fossils and other objects of interest as we find them, we pass the gift of discovery on to those who follow. **Leave What You Find** means retaining the special qualities of every wildland area – for the long term.

## **Preserve the Past**

Historical structures, dwellings and artifacts on public lands are protected by the Archaeological Resource Protection Act and the National Historic Preservation Act and should not be disturbed. It is illegal to excavate, disturb or remove these resources from any public lands. **Observe, but do not touch them.**

## **Leave Natural Features Undisturbed**

Let pictures, drawings and memories comprise your souvenirs. Objects in nature derive much of their beauty from their surroundings.

## **Avoid Spreading Non-Native Plants and Animals**

Invasive species of plants, animals, and organisms can cause large-scale irreversible changes to the ecosystem by eliminating native species over time. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, invasive species have contributed to the decline of 42 percent of the country's threatened and endangered species. At least 1.5 million acres of National Park Service Lands are severely infested.

**OUR  
WORLD**  
...TO CARE FOR



# Fifth Principle of Leave No Trace



## Minimize Campfire Impacts





**Is a campfire really necessary?**  
**Land managers and backcountry rangers agree that campfires constitute the single most prevalent recreational impact in the backcountry.**



## **Firewood**

- ▶ Avoid using hatchets, saws, or breaking branches off standing or downed trees. Dead and down wood burns easily, is easy to collect and leaves less impact.
- ▶ Use small pieces of wood no larger than the diameter of an adult wrist that can be broken with your hands

## **Cleanup**

- ▶ Provide adequate supervision for young people when using stoves or fires
- ▶ Follow all product and safety labels for stoves
- ▶ Use approved containers for fuel



## When is a fire appropriate?

The most important factor in determining whether or not to have a fire are:

1. Fire danger for the particular time, date and location
2. The availability of the right amount and type of firewood
3. Administrative restrictions or burn bans



## Fire Selection and Gathering

Only one type of wood is acceptable for building a low-impact campfire – dead and downed wood. Dead wood is the obvious choice because it burns better than green wood. Collect loose sticks and branches from the ground. Firewood should be gathered from a wide area and not in the common vicinity of the camp.

Fires must be put out completely any time you are not in camp. Scatter unburned wood around the campsite in a way that blends naturally with the surroundings.





Too often, fire sites are left in total disarray and cluttered with litter, half burned logs and a mountain of coals.

In popular campsites used by many people, encourage campers to use the same established fire rings. Clean food waste and trash from the ring, crush any remaining coals completely out and scatter the cold ashes over a large area. Thanks to your efforts, the next party will be more likely to use a clean site rather than construct a new one.



**LNT fires are small and burnt down to ashes**

**LNT fires do not leave scorched rock or dead earth**



**Use existing fire rings in a well-placed campsite**



## Alternatives to fire rings

Locate all fires away from thick vegetation, boulders and overhangs, which can burn or become scarred by fire, smoke or soot.



## The Fire Pit

When camping near large rivers and creeks, build a fire on exposed gravel bars well below the high-water line. Build your fire in a shallow pit, scooped out in the gravel or sand. Take extra care to keep any food or waste products from entering the water source.

## The Mound Fire

An innovative method of building a low-impact fire is the mound fire. Mound fires can be built virtually anywhere with a simple tool: a garden trowel, large stuff sack and a ground cloth.



# Sixth Principle of Leave No Trace



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# Respect Wildlife



# Respect Wildlife - Leave No Trace

Respect for wildlife comes in many different forms ...  
a peaceful coexistence







# Using the Thumb Trick:

## Keep a Safe Distance From Wildlife



Would you like to learn about how we can respect wildlife while we are out on the trail by using the thumb trick? It's easy, make a thumbs up, extend your arm all the way, close one eye, and see if you can hide the animal with your thumb. If you can't hide the entire animal with your thumb take a few steps back and try again. When you can hide the whole animal, this means you are a safe distance from wildlife.

**Enjoy the beauty of the wilderness while sharing the land with the wildlife!**

A fun, simple LNT reminder to follow the sixth principle ...

Put up three fingers on both hands and put them on your head like a moose or deer to remind those in your group to respect wildlife and their habitats.

May also be a signal to others that wildlife are close, without making a sound.



# Observe From A Distance

Always observe or photograph wildlife from a safe distance to avoid startling them or forcing them to flee, possibly away from their young.



**Do not follow or approach them.**

Use observation areas, platforms and trails provided in many areas, and use binoculars, spotting scopes and telephoto lenses to watch wildlife in their natural settings.







**GOOD INTENTIONS CAN HURT  
LEAVE WILDLIFE IN THE WILD**







Back away if animal reacts to your presence



Avoid quick movements and direct eye contact with predatory animals



Stay out of wildlife's line of travel if they are on the move





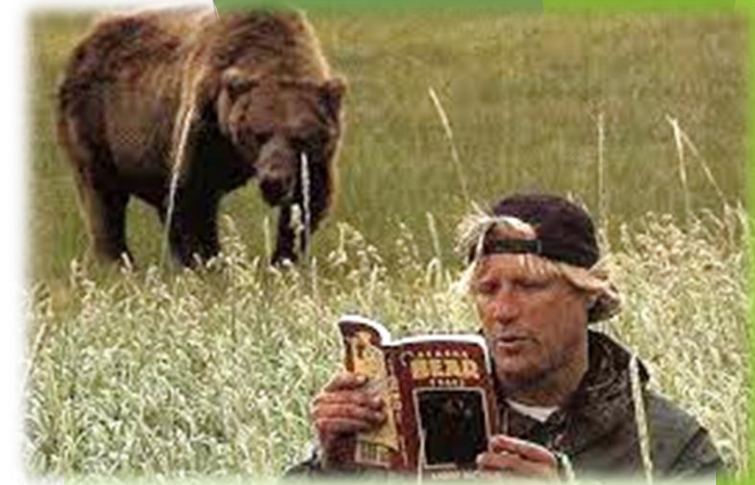
Don't disturb wildlife by shouting or throwing something just to get a better picture



Travel quietly, except in bear or mountain lion country



Don't hike at night where nocturnal predators may present a hazard to safety



**Be Bear Aware!**

**Be considerate of animal's needs and temperaments, especially at critical times and critical places.**





**Charging Elk!**

**Most people believe they know how to respect wildlife - but not all wildlife have received the memo!**

People's actions often undercut their good intentions; unaware of the impact to the wildlife. Encroaching on wildlife and their habitats can cause unnecessary stress, can cause animals to burn calories they need to survive, and may cause them to flee their young or be chased from their critical habitat.

Unintended and damaging consequences may result when an animal, whether a charging elk, coiled rattlesnake or a protective mother bear, shifts away from the flight instinct to the impulse to fight an intruder.

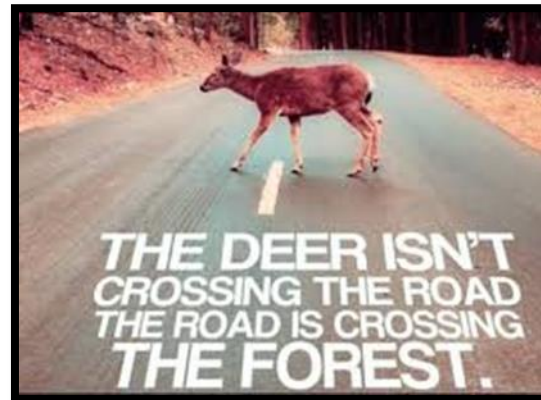


**Too close encounter!**



# Avoid Sensitive Times and Habitats

Animals are sensitive to recreationists while pursuing and defending their mates and territories, birthing and guarding their young or nests, and when food is scarce.





# Never Feed Wild Animals!

Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters their natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.



**Human foods and products are harmful to wildlife which disrupts their natural feeding cycles and habits.**

Animals, especially bears, become habituated to people, usually because they associate people with food. They can rapidly become problem animals and will have to be dealt with accordingly, often at the expense of their life.



I ate hooman food and now I don't feel so good!



**NO, PLEASE! NO PEOPLE FOOD!**

“Bear Considerations” should also be used where cougars, wolves and other carnivores inhabit.





Wildlife and pets are not a good mix. It is imperative that dogs have current vaccinations to avoid being carriers of or contracting infectious diseases such as rabies and parvo-virus, especially in areas with wolf populations. Do your “doody” and remove pet feces from trails, picnic areas, and campsites, as you would human waste.



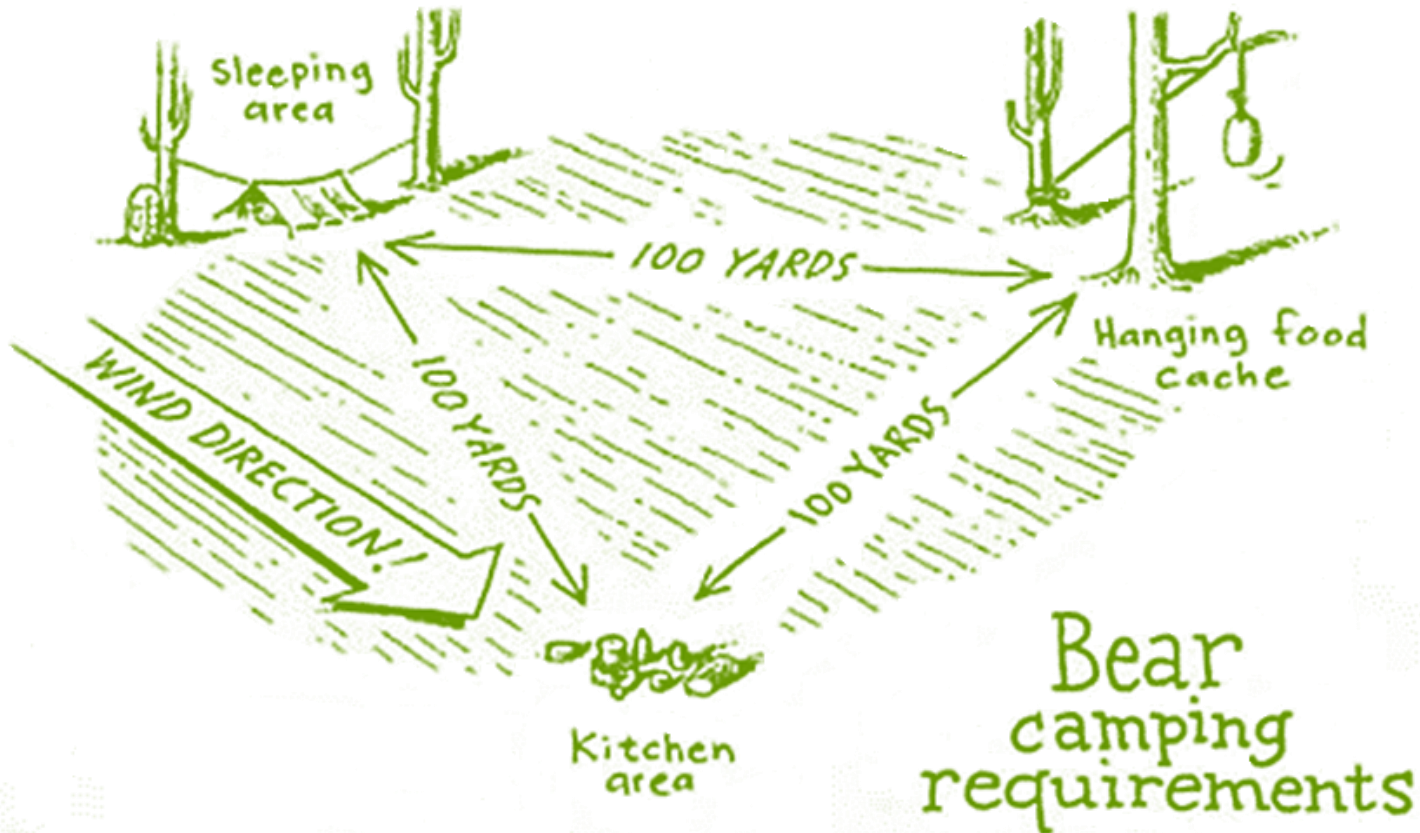
**My dog is such a well-trained and gentle soul;  
until one day he wasn't!**

**Always use a harness and short leash to control your dog!  
Best case scenario would be to leave your pets at home, if possible.**

# Control Your Pets



# Use the Bear-muda Triangle to Stay Safe & Keep Bears Wild



Improper food storage can have consequences for both bears and humans. You can prevent bear interactions by using the Bear-muda Triangle. Set up your tent, kitchen area, and food storage 70 big steps apart (100ft). Bears smell 2-3 miles away, so even if your food is stored away, a bear may come to investigate. Using the Bear-muda Triangle, even if the bear comes into the area sniffing for dinner, you'll be safely away in your tent. Stay safe and help keep bears wild.



## **What is wrong with this behavior?**

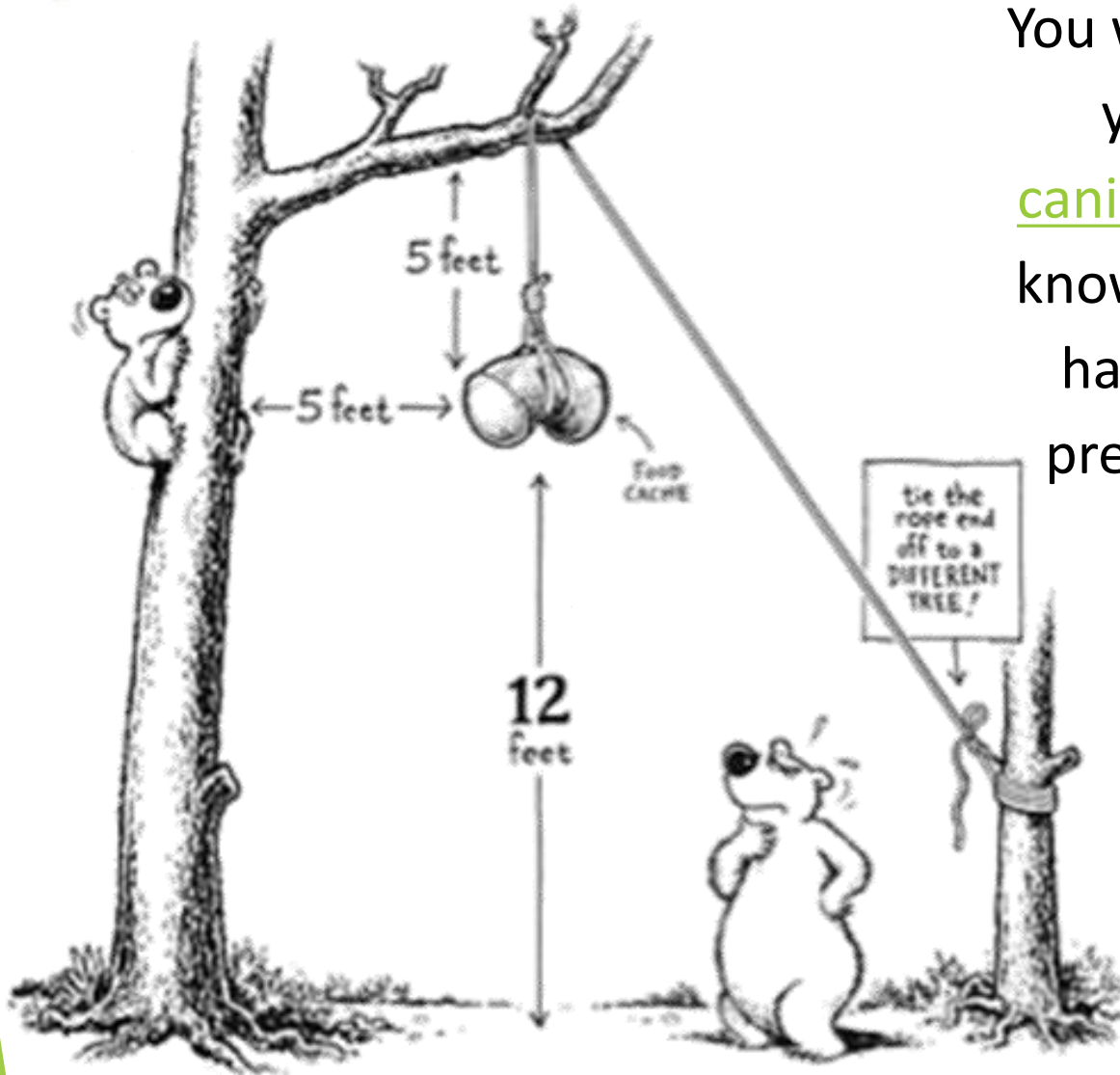
**Wildlife should be just that—wild. Providing access to human food, or even just approaching too closely, is more harmful than most people imagine.**



# Bears Complain:

## PCT Bear Hang is Unbearable!

You will want to know if you need a bear canister or will need to know how to do a bear hang, and what the preferred method is.



Bear bags should be hung 12 feet off the ground, 5 feet away from the tree and 5 feet from the branch it is hung off of. Tie the end of the rope off to a different tree.



# Respect Wildlife – Principle #6

While enjoying the best that winters have to offer...

1. Keep Your Noise Down



2. Keep Your Dog on a Leash



3. Still Don't Feed the Wildlife



4. Give Them Space



5. Watch Where You are Going



**Enjoy! Have Fun! Leave No Trace!**

# Seventh Principle of Leave No Trace Be Considerate of Others





Many people go to the backcountry to enjoy the peace and solitude a wilderness setting can provide. Being considerate of others and practicing good camp and trail etiquette helps ensure that everyone enjoys the visit.


Be aware of your surroundings  
and your noise levels.

Respect private property. Always get permission to  
use or cross private land.

Hikers should pull off the trail when meeting stock users. Riders should ask the hikers to speak to their horses so the horses will realize that they are just people with strange looking packs on their backs and not be spooked by their presence. Hikers carry heavy packs and deserve to be on the trail too; so if riders can find a spot to pull off and let them pass, it will promote understanding and appreciation between different user groups who share the common goal to **LEAVE NO TRACE**.







Together we can teach others how to  
minimize impact and keep the  
wilderness wild by utilizing the  
seven principles of  
Leave No Trace!

Happy Teaching!



Respect Wildlife!