

Outdoor Ethics

It is strongly recommended that all outdoor clubs adhere to a set of outdoor ethics to minimize their impact on the land and leave it better than they found it.

The seven principles of [Leave No Trace](#) provide a solid framework for developing an outdoor club's ethics. The practices described under each principle below can be related to all outdoor activities you will do with your club.



Leave No Trace principles were developed in the 1970s through a partnership between public land management agencies and outdoor companies. As people began to practice these principles, the impact on natural ecosystems was minimized. Your Outdoor Club can do its part by following the principles listed below.

Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Develop a plan for the trip and be sure everyone in the group and someone back home knows it.
- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- Durable surfaces include maintained trails and designated campsites, rock, gravel, sand, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
- Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.

Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite, food preparation areas, and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food and litter.
- Utilize toilet facilities whenever possible. Otherwise, deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep, at least 200 feet from water, camp and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

Leave What You Find

- Preserve the past: examine, photograph, but do not touch cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.

Minimize Campfire Impacts

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the environment. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use down and dead wood from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, [habituates them to humans], and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

Additional Resources

[Leave No Trace Online Awareness Course](#)

[Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Outdoor Ethics Course](#)

[Beyond Leave No Trace: Historical background; putting LNT in perspective](#)