

LEAVE NO TRACE

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WILDCHINA

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As an advocate for responsible travel, WildChina practices the Seven Principles of the Leave No Trace outdoor code. The Leave No Trace policy provides a set framework for those visiting the outdoors formatted in a user-friendly guide on how to minimize impact on the environment.

All WildChina guides and outdoor operators not only follow the Leave No Trace code themselves but also work to educate visitors on how they can do the same.

The Seven Principles are as follows:

LEAVE NO TRACE



Plan Ahead and Prepare

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Adequate trip planning and preparation helps backcountry travelers accomplish trip goals safely and enjoyably, while simultaneously minimizing damage to the land.

Poor planning often results in miserable campers and damage to natural and cultural resources.

Rangers often tell stories of campers they have encountered who, because of poor planning and unexpected conditions, degrade backcountry resources and put themselves at risk.

Elements to prepare for:

- Weather
- Terrain
- Local regulations and restrictions
- Private land boundaries
- Anticipated food and water consumption
(leftovers create waste which leaves a trace!)
- Group size



Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

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The goal of travel in the outdoors is to move through natural areas while avoiding damage to the land or waterways.

Understanding how travel causes impacts is necessary to accomplish this goal. Travel damage occurs when surface vegetation or communities of organisms are trampled beyond recovery.

The resulting barren area leads to soil erosion and the development of undesirable trails. Backcountry travel may involve travel over both trails and off-trail areas.

- Durability refers to the ability of surfaces or vegetation to withstand wear or remain in a stable condition. Avoid fragile areas.
- Frequency of use and large group size increases the likelihood that a large area will be trampled, or that a small area will be trampled multiple times. Avoid visibly overused areas.



Dispose of Waste Properly

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Leave No Trace encourages outdoor enthusiasts to consider the impacts that they leave behind, which will undoubtedly affect other people, water, and wildlife.

- Waste does not only refer to plastic and litter, when camping or outdoors human waste is also a necessary consideration. To avoid polluting an area,
 - A. Check for signs pointing to a public toilet
 - B. If there is no official toilet in the area, find an appropriate place to pop-a-squat by:
 1. Locating a place at least 200m away from any water sources
 2. Digging a hole 6-8 inches deep
 3. Packing out your used toilet roll
- Bring a trash bag on your hike so you can carry out all your trash and any other trash you encounter on the way.
- Dispose of all trash and waste in an allocated trash can



Leave What You Find

Leave What You Find

Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants, archaeological artifacts, and other objects of interest as you find them.

- Leave the place as you found it (or even better by taking away any trash!)
- Don't leave holes
- Don't carve into trees or etch on rocks – you are not the first pioneer here nor will you be the last, your name and your mark only mar nature for future visitors
- When foraging, don't take or harvest every last specimen



Minimize Camp Fire Impacts

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The use of campfires, once a necessity for cooking and warmth, is steeped in history and tradition. Some people would not think of camping without a campfire.

Yet, the natural appearance of many areas has been degraded by the overuse of fires and increasing demand for firewood.

The development of lightweight efficient camp stoves has encouraged a shift away from the traditional fire for cooking.

Stoves have become essential equipment for minimum-impact camping.

They are fast, and flexible and eliminate firewood availability as a concern in campsite selection.

Stoves operate in almost any weather condition—and they Leave No Trace.

Minimize Camp Fire Impacts

- If a campfire is not necessary, pack in a portable stove instead.
- If you do choose to have a campfire, consider whether or not you should be building a fire by checking for no campfire signs or consulting local fire authorities on fire danger ratings.
- If you are permitted to have a campfire and choose to do so, it is your responsibility to ensure the fire is 100% extinguished and no trace of your fire pit remains when you leave.



Respect Wildlife

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Minimize Camp Fire Impacts

Learn about wildlife through quiet observation. Do not disturb wildlife or plants just for a “better look.” Observe wildlife from a distance so they are not scared or forced to flee.

Large groups often cause more damage to the environment and can disturb wildlife so keep your group small.

If you have a larger group, divide into smaller groups, if possible, to minimize your impacts.

- Do not touch
- Do not make loud noises (except in situations of self-defense)
- Do not feed



Be Considerate of Other Visitors

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One of the most important components of outdoor ethics is to maintain courtesy toward other visitors. It helps everyone enjoy their outdoor experience.

Many people come to the outdoors to listen to nature. Excessive noise, uncontrolled pets, and damaged surroundings take away from the natural appeal of the outdoors.

The Seven Principles are well established and widely known, but they are not static. The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics continually examines, evaluates, and reshapes the principles and as such, WildChina endeavors to remain up to date by providing continual training.

See the Leave No Trace website to learn more: <https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/dispose-of-waste-properly/>



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