



Plan Ahead and Prepare

Poor advance preparation can cause damage to the environment. Small impacts repeated by thousands become major impacts.

- ♦ **Examine PCTA, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management websites** in advance, and consult bulletin boards for regulations and guidelines. Note that camping and fire restrictions vary. Visit in the smallest possible group size; most campsites can't handle more than eight people. If day-hiking with a larger group, split up while hiking.
- ♦ Carry a **litter bag** and use it. Bring a **lightweight trowel** for burying human waste (feces). Consider **minimum impact gear** such as a free-standing tent and earth-tone colored gear.
- ♦ Carefully **planned meals** reduce impacts. Minimize leftovers by repackaging food into portions appropriate for your group.
- ♦ **Prepare for extreme weather**, hazards, and emergencies – especially the cold – to avoid impacts from searches, rescues, and campfires.
- ♦ Carry a **bear-resistant food container** wherever advised for storing food, trash and other scented items. In other areas, a **waterproof bag** and **at least 50 feet of cord** can be used to counter-balance your food and garbage from a tree limb.

Travel And Camp On Durable Surfaces

One careless step can start a trend of impact. Choose durable surfaces when you hike or stop for a rest.

- ♦ **Focus activities on durable surfaces** such as pine needles, sand, snow and rock.
- ♦ **While on the trail, walk single file** and avoid walking on soft, muddy areas on the sides of the tread, and on fragile plants such as lichens, mosses, flowers and seedlings. Hike on the trail; never cut switchbacks. If hiking cross-country, disperse your use (walk widely apart from one another, each choosing a new route) so a trail is not created.
- ♦ **Avoid expanding existing campsites** by using the already-impacted core areas of campsites. In pristine areas, select a durable surface such as a granite boulder or gravel ledge; naturalize the area before departing by replacing any rocks or sticks you moved.



Leave No Trace on the Pacific Crest Trail

Leave What You Find

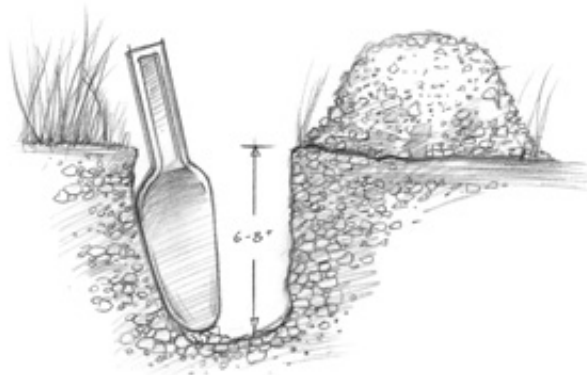
Removing or altering natural or historic items harms wildlife, scenery, and cultural values.

- ♦ **Don't damage live trees or plants.** Leave dead standing trees and dead limbs for the wildlife.
- ♦ **Take only pictures.** Enjoy, but leave cultural artifacts and natural and historic features undisturbed.
- ♦ **Don't carve** or mark on trees, rocks or signs. Refrain from building structures (rock walls, cairns, log structures, etc.) or digging trenches around tents.

Dispose of Waste Properly

Improper disposal of food, trash, urine, feces, and wastewater spreads disease, changes the habits of wildlife, and spoils the scenery.

- ♦ **Pack it in, Pack it out. Don't burn, bury, or leave any litter** (which includes food, nut shells, fruit peels, paper or cigarette butts).
- ♦ **If an outdoor toilet (privy) is available, use it**, but leave only human waste and toilet paper there – nothing else. Pack out disposable wipes and feminine hygiene products.
- ♦ **If there is no privy, bury feces in a hole** 6 to 8 inches deep and at least **200 feet** (80 steps) away from campsites, trails, and water. Or better yet, do it miles away from camp and water. **Don't hide your waste under a rock**; it won't decompose quickly there. **Pack out your toilet paper**; animals may dig it up.
- ♦ In special conditions **pack out human waste**. This is especially important in certain places such as the **Mt. Whitney region**, or **during winter** when deep snow prevents digging down to the soil.
- ♦ **Disperse urine, toothpaste, cooking water and strained dishwater** at least **200 feet** away from campsites so the soil is not polluted and so wildlife won't be attracted by the odors and become pests.
- ♦ **Wash dishes, bodies, and clothing 200 feet away from water sources.** Eliminate or minimize any use of soap. Dishwater can often be avoided by making a drink of the boiled water used to clean out the remnants of your meal from your bowl or cup.





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Minimize Campfire Impacts

Campfires burn wood that would otherwise provides wildlife habitat and replenishes the soil. Trash burned in campfires attracts animals (skunks, bears and mice, creates an eyesore, and releases toxic fumes.

- ♦ **Use stoves for cooking.** If you must build a fire, build one only where it's legal, use an existing fire ring (don't create a new one) and keep your fire small. Alcohol and wood burning stoves may be prohibited if campfires are banned.
- ♦ **Leave hatchets and saws at home.** Collect dead and downed wood you can break by hand, no bigger than your wrist.
- ♦ **Do not burn trash.** This includes foil, plastic, glass, cans, tea bags, food, or anything with food on it. Leave fire rings clean.

Respect Wildlife

When wild animals obtain human food, or are approached too closely by humans, they may lose their wild habits, spread disease, and become nuisances or safety hazards.

- ♦ **Don't feed wildlife** intentionally or unintentionally. Clean up food spills completely. Eat or pack out all food scraps, including the "bits" from dishwater.
- ♦ **Store food** and scented articles (toothpaste, sunscreen, insect repellent, water purification chemicals, balm, etc.) out of reach of bears and other animals using approved food storage devices. If hung, food, garbage, etc., should be 12 feet from the ground and 6 feet out from a limb or trunk, using a counter-balance method.
- ♦ Protect wildlife by viewing animals from a **respectful distance**. If you are hiking with a **dog**, keep it **restrained and leashed**.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Hike your own hike, but remember that inconsiderate behavior detracts from the experience of others.

- ♦ **Keep a low profile.** When selecting a campsite, choose an area not visible to other visitors, where rocks and trees will screen you from view. A highly visible campsite out in the open or on a lakeshore can "occupy" a large area and prevent others from enjoying the solitude they seek.
- ♦ **Keep voices and noise to a minimum.** Protect the "quiet" experience that many seek. Refrain from using cell phones or audio equipment within sight or sound of others, and turn ringers off.
- ♦ **Keep your dog away from springs and small drinking water sources.** Bury your dog's waste as you would your own.
- ♦ **Step off on a durable surface** and **yield to others** on the trail.

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