



Green Mountain *National Forest*

Caring for the Land and Serving People

Leave No Trace Principles

General Forest Information:

The Following are the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare:

- **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.
- Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4 to 6.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns, or flagging.

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces:

- Durable surfaces include **established trails** and **campsites**, rock, gravel, 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.
 - In popular areas:
 - Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
 - Walk in single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
 - Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
 - In pristine areas:
 - Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
 - Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

3. Dispose of Waste Properly:

- **Pack it in, pack it out.** Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled food. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Dispose of **human waste in cat holes** dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least **200 feet from water, camp, and trails**. Cover and disguise the cat hole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- To **wash** yourself or your dishes, carry water **200 feet away from streams or lakes** and use small amounts of biodegradable soap.



U.S. Department
of Agriculture

Green Mountain & Finger Lakes National Forests

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4. Leave What You Find:

- **Preserve the past:** examine 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.
- **Do not build** structures, construct furniture, **or dig** trenches.

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts:

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

6. Respect Wildlife:

- **Observe wildlife from a distance.** Do not follow or approach them.
- **Never feed animals.** Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- **Protect** wildlife and your food **by storing rations and trash securely.** Store food by “bear bagging” it: hang your food and trash 10’ to 12’ off the ground and 4’ to 5’ feet from the tree trunks.
- **Control pets** at all times or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

7. 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 the trail and other visitors.
- **Let nature’s sounds prevail.** Avoid loud voices and noises.



Leave No Trace, Inc. is a national non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and inspiring outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnerships. Leave No Trace builds awareness, appreciation, and respect for our wildlands.

For More Information:

Manchester Ranger District: 2538 Depot St., Manchester Center, VT 05255, (802) 362-2307

Middlebury Ranger District: 1007 Route 7 South, Middlebury, VT 05753, (802) 388-4362

Rochester Ranger District: 99 Ranger Rd., Rochester, VT 05767, (802) 767-4261

Rutland Supervisor Office: 231 North Main St., Rutland, VT 05701, (802) 747-6700

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Leave No Trace, Inc. (www.lnt.org)

This Recreation Guide is Available in Large Print at Forest Service Information Centers

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