



Leaving No Trace

The Sierra Nevada is by any measure one of the great ranges of the world. But popularity also leads to environmental pressures and without care and awareness on the part of those who visit will change and degrade the same places we love and have come to visit. We want to do our part to ensure that those who follow in our steps will also experience an untouched natural wilderness. We ask you to help in this goal and offer the following suggestions to minimize our social and environmental impacts.

The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE
TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES
DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY
LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND
MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS
RESPECT WILDLIFE
BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS



Before you leave home: Plan ahead and prepare

- Pack according to our equipment lists so as not to bring excess equipment.
- If you have new equipment remove all packaging and tags; less trash to haul out and less to misplace.
- Remove extra food packaging and instead put your food in ziplock bags or better yet just light weight non-zip plastic bags. Use a loose knot instead of a twist tie.

When on the trip:

Travel and camp on durable surfaces:

- Stay on the trails as we travel in. (Please no cutting switchbacks on the trail.)
- We want to take breaks on durable surfaces. I.e. toss the pack down on a boulder rather than in the middle of a pretty meadow with soft (fragile) grass. Ideally we also take rest stops out of sight of the trail so other visitors don't even know we're there.
- If we encounter pack stock move to the downhill side of the trail and let them pass.
- Since we often hike off-trail to the peaks we want to hike on hard surfaces rather than on meadows or other fragile spots.
- We choose a camp site on a hard surface or somewhere that has already been used for camping. In the alpine environment woody stemmed plants, especially heather, are particularly susceptible to damage.
- Our ideal campsite will be on snow where the sun will soon remove any traces of our presence.
- Have a lightweight soft pair of shoes or sandals for around camp and wear these rather than heavy mountaineering boots which tear up the vegetation.
- In camp on dirt we do not trench or dig drainage ditches. "Good camp spots are found and not made".
- If we use a little used campsite we want to "naturalize" the area when we leave by scattering tent tiedown rocks and policing the area for errant pieces of garbage and the like prior to our departure.
- We do not use campfires on trips. Stoves only.
- We carry out all trash. This includes "biodegradables" such as apple cores etc.
- We want to keep track of all trash. Candy wrappers etc. are easy to drop. With soup or drink packages, and the like, do not completely tear off the top when opening. Leave it partially attached and it will not get lost.
- No feeding of the local inhabitants. It gets them into bad habits and they are more likely to raid our camp once they get the taste for human food.
- We want to store all food in such a way that avoids any animals getting into it, including bears, mice and marmots. This may mean hanging in some areas and bear canisters in others.
- Human waste. Avoid peeing on vegetation where the salt content may attract animals. Solid waste needs to be buried at least six inches deep when we're not in the alpine zone. We'll brief you on trip-specific concerns with the human waste issue at the beginning of your trip. We do not burn TP; in the forest the risk of fire is too great and it is too hard to completely burn the paper. On snow it gets damp and just smolders. It needs to be carried out so bring a spare ziplock bag for it. Your guide will fill you in on the details. Be prepared to personally pack it out. On Mount Whitney the removal of human solid waste is obligatory. We will provide the "poop bag" system for this.
- In winter use a tree well or a designated spot for peeing. Great care must be taken on on-snow trips to avoid contaminating water sources when the snow melts.
- There is no real need to use soap in the backcountry. If you do want to freshen up use straight water. Collect water and go 200 feet away from the water source.
- Clean all dishes 200 feet away from the water source, strain the waste water through one of our strainers to remove food scraps and then disperse the rinse water. But do not contaminate a wide area of snow where others might gather it to make drinking water.

We are all a part of the solution and our individual actions can have a major long term impact.