

Conduct for the Outdoors and Trail

Compiled by: Bob Johnson

Perhaps the most difficult concept to comprehend is the wonder of the great outdoors and how beautifully designed trail systems get the visitor to one point of interest to another. In doing so, not everyone understands the construction phase of building trails and how much emphasis is placed on the builders to not violate or destroy the wilderness in the process of creating a pathway. Trails need to be constructed as if it were a surgical cut in the woods and everything on either side of this new cut is pristine, not disturbed. Crew Leaders have a responsibility to promote and educate their crew with certain code of ethics and construction concepts.

Below is listed some of the Codes of Conduct in the outdoors that apply to trail builders.

Trail Code of Conduct

- Do not do anything illegal or do anything against park/trail rules.
- Stay on the marked trails at all times. Off-trail wilderness scars easily and can take years to recover.
- Always listen to safety rules and event agendas provided by trip leaders.
- Do not hike alone and generally stay with the group.
- Please drive only on the roads provided; vehicles can damage vegetation.
- Fire can cause devastating losses. Please don't throw cigarette butts down. The lighting of fires is strictly forbidden except in the designated areas at the parks or hiking areas.
- Please do not litter. There is no one to clean up after you.
- To protect our environment we would appreciate if a policy of "whatever you bring in - you take out" was followed.
- It is illegal to pick any plant, or to disturb or kill any animal or to remove or disfigure any biological, archaeological or geological material.
- Hikers taking deliberate and obvious short cuts when hiking could speed up erosion and damage wilderness. This is a punishable offense at many parks and you are asked to remain on the paths.



The Outdoor Code

**As an American, I will do my best to -
Be clean in my outdoor manners.
Be careful with fire.
Be considerate in the outdoors.
Be conservation minded.**

Discover the rewards of responsible outdoor recreation!

Do all you can to help preserve the beauty and inspiring attributes of our lands and waters for yourself and future generations.

Travel and recreate with minimum impact

- Stay on legally designated trails.
- Don't create new routes or expand existing trails.
- Travel only in areas that are open to your type of recreation.
- Cross streams only on bridges or at fords where trails intersect streams.
- Avoid marshy areas and wet meadows.
- Don't cut switchbacks.
- Respect the environment and the rights of others.



Respect and be considerate of other users so that all can enjoy a quality experience in the great outdoors

- Hikers should yield to horseback riders.
- Bicycle riders should yield to horseback riders and hikers.
- ATV and off-highway motorcycle riders should yield to hikers, bicyclers and horseback riders.
- Give horseback riders the right-of-way. If possible, step off the trail on the downhill side and talk calmly to the rider.
- Snowmobilers should yield to cross-country skiers and dog mushers.



Respect wildlife. Be sensitive to their life-sustaining needs by keeping your distance.

- Comply with signs.
- Always obtain permission to cross private land. Leave gates as you found them unless posted otherwise.

LEAVE NO TRACE Outdoor Ethics

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 4-5. . Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of rock cairns, flagging or marking paint.

TRAVEL & 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 or streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.

In popular areas:

- Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
- Walk 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.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Deposit solid 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. Scatter strained dishwater.

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, furniture or dig trenches.

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, fire pans, or mound fires.
- 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, 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, 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 trails.
- 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.