

Protect the Appalachian Trail

LEAVE NO TRACE



PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

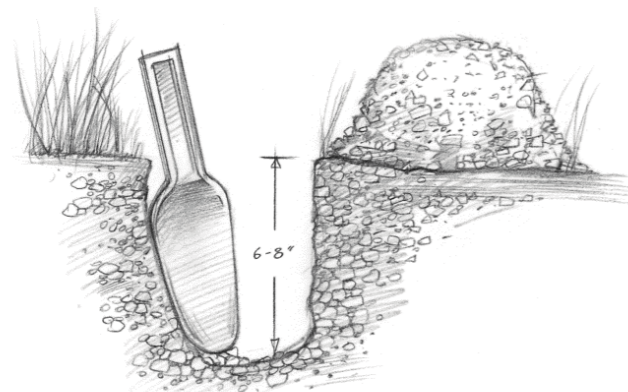
Poor advance preparation can cause damage to the environment.

- Check maps and guidebooks for guidance on camping regulations, which vary along the Trail.
- Bring appropriate clothing and gear for cold, wet, windy conditions to avoid emergencies. Carry a tent or tarp so you are not dependent on shelters.
- Bring a waterproof bag and 50 feet of rope for hanging food, trash and other scented articles. Carry a litter bag.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

Improper waste disposal can spread disease, change the habits of wildlife and spoil the scenery.

- Pack it in; pack it out. Leave any donated items at hiker boxes in town rather than at campsites or shelters.
- Walk at least 100 feet (40 steps) away from shelters, water sources and campsites to dispose of urine, toothpaste, cooking water and strained dishwater, and to wash bodies, dishes or clothing. Minimize any use of soap.
- Use the privy only for human waste and toilet paper. Pack out disposable wipes and hygiene products.
- If there is no privy, walk at least 200 feet (80 steps) away from campsites, shelters, trails and water sources to bury feces in a hole 6 to 8 inches deep. Bury or carry out toilet paper.



TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

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

- Focus activities on durable places like rock, bare soil and grasses. Walk on well-established trails; avoid using shortcuts and faint trails.
- Move branches from the trail, rather than going around and creating new trails.
- Avoid expanding existing campsites by using the most impacted areas of well-established campsites.

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

Campfires burn wood that could provide wildlife habitat and replenish the soil. Burning trash releases toxic chemicals and fumes.

- Use stoves for cooking. Build a fire only where it's legal; use an existing fire ring and keep your fire small.
- Leave hatchets and saws at home. Collect dead and downed wood that you can break by hand, no bigger than your wrist.
- Refrain from burning trash; burn coals to ash and leave fire rings clean.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

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

- Keep loud voices and noise to a minimum. Refrain from using cell phones or audio equipment around other hikers.
- Avoid "taking over" a shelter; be welcoming. Limit how long you stay.
- Keep your dog away from drinking water sources. Ask before bringing your dog into a shelter. Bury your dog's waste as your own, or pack it out.
- Step off on a durable surface and yield to others.

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LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

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

- Take only photographs. Leave cultural artifacts and natural and historic features undisturbed.
- Leave dead standing trees and dead limbs for the wildlife.
- Do not mark or carve on shelters or signs.

RESPECT WILDLIFE

Minimize human influence on wildlife behavior.

- If you are hiking with a dog, keep it restrained and leashed at all times.
- Avoid feeding wildlife. Pack out all food scraps.
- Store food, garbage and scented articles out of reach of animals using approved food storage devices or hang 12 feet from the ground and 6 feet out from a limb or trunk.

