

→ Why It Matters

Millions of people visit the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) each year. Each person's actions add up! Your group can be stewards of the Trail by practicing the **7 principles of Leave No Trace**:

1. Plan Ahead & Prepare

2. Travel & Camp On Durable Surfaces

3. Dispose of Waste Properly

4. Leave What You Find

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts

6. Respect Wildlife

7. Be Considerate of Others

Register Today

Register your group's itinerary on ATCamp.org to reduce crowding and get trip planning resources!



Have an overnight group larger than 10 people? Plan to split up and camp separately or camp at a front country campground and day hike on the A.T. Contact us for trip planning help at info@appalachiantrail.org.

6 Respect Wildlife

Protect the animals that call the A.T. home.

- Properly store all food, trash, and scented items in a hard sided bear canister.
- If you can't cover an animal with your thumb when you look at it, you're too close!
- Keep dogs leashed.

7 Be Considerate of Others

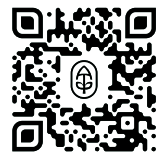
For many the A.T. is a place to enjoy the quiet solitude of nature. Be an ambassador for groups by respecting everyone you meet along the way.

- Step off the Trail onto a durable surface to let others pass.
- Plan to gather for breaks and tent out of sight and earshot of others.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Remind your group that voices can travel far, especially across water.
- Avoid monopolizing viewpoints, water sources, and shared areas at overnight sites.
- Plan to tent if camping with your dog.

→ Learn More

Scan the QR code or visit appalachiantrail.org for:

- The latest Trail conditions
- Camping regulations and permits
- Trip planning help
- Volunteer opportunities
- Maps and guidebooks
- And more!



**Appalachian Trail
Conservancy**



**LEAVE
NO TRACE**
Proud Partner

Leave No Trace on the Appalachian Trail

Group Leader & Participant Guidelines



**Appalachian Trail
Conservancy**

7 Principles of Leave No Trace

1 Plan Ahead & Prepare



Researching where you're headed and bringing the gear you need are the foundation of a fun, safe, low-impact trip on the A.T.

The group size limit for most of the A.T. is 10 people for overnight trips or 25 people for day hikes, including leaders. It may be fewer in some areas like designated wilderness. This is to protect the Trail from damage that can occur when larger groups travel together.

- Limit your group to 10 people for overnights, 25 for day hikes.
- Check with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) or land managers on camping policies (including group size limits) and if a permit is needed.
- Carry tents or tarps so you can leave shelters for solo hikers.
- Visit popular spots during less crowded times or in the offseason. Try to visit the Trail midweek.
- Reduce trash by repackaging food and planning meals.
- Bring gear that facilitates low-impact camping: trash bags, camp stoves, trowels, strainers for dishwater, and bear cans.



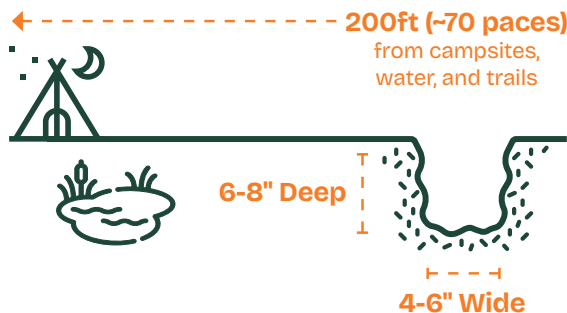
2 Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces

Durable surfaces include bare dirt, rocks, grassy fields, snow, and tent pads.

- Camp at designated sites vs. making your own campsite.
- Stay on established trails when hiking and moving around camp.
- Gather only on durable surfaces. Avoid gathering on vegetation, shorelines and edges of streams, bogs/wet areas, and in alpine zones.

3 Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack out all trash and food waste. Don't burn trash or leave any food, including compostable items like apple cores—these can attract animals if left behind.
- Poop goes in the privy (outhouse). If no privy is available, bury poop in a cathole dug 6-8" deep and 70 big steps from water, campsites, and trails.
- Only poop and toilet paper goes in privies and catholes. Pack out all wipes, tampons, pads, and other trash.
- Wash dishes and bodies, and brush teeth 40 big steps from water. Strain and pack out food scraps.



4 Leave What You Find

Help keep the Trail beautiful and protect A.T. ecosystems.

- Leave cultural artifacts, plants, and other natural objects.
- Don't carve into or graffiti trees, rocks, signs, or shelters.
- Don't stack rocks, dig trenches, or build structures.

5 Minimize Campfire Impacts



Campfires can permanently scar soil and accidentally start wildfires.

- Use stoves for cooking and headlamps or lanterns for ambiance instead of having a campfire.
- Know where campfires are allowed on the A.T. Don't have a campfire when it's windy.
- If you have a campfire, keep it small and use only dead, downed wood no thicker than your wrist.
- Burn campfires to ash. Make sure they are out and cold before leaving or going to sleep.