

Recommendations for Managing Recreation-related Impacts in the Adirondack Park and Building a Culture of Wildlands Stewardship



Prepared by Ben Lawhon, MS | Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics | December 2019



Confidentiality Notice

This document contains confidential and proprietary information of the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics (the Center). Accordingly, this document is confidential and is intended solely for the information of the individual or entity to which it is delivered by or on behalf of the Center. By accepting a copy of this document, the recipient agrees not to copy, distribute or otherwise disclose this document or its contents or any other related information to any other individual or entity without the prior written consent of the Center. For more information on Leave No Trace, please visit www.LNT.org or call 1.800.332.4100

*Stewardship – *the management necessary to preserve wilderness, natural resources, and access for current and future generations.*

Recommendations for Managing Recreation-related Impacts in the Adirondack Park and Building a Culture of Wildlands Stewardship*

***A note about this document:** This document is a DRAFT subset of a larger report that is currently being prepared by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. The full assessment report will be completed by February 2020. Given that this is a draft, it is possible that some of the following information may be altered, updated, edited, or omitted in the final assessment report. Due to the fact that the recommendations included in this draft were requested by the Adirondack Council and the Adirondack Mountain Club prior to the completion of the final report, caution should be exercised when disseminating this document without the full context of the report and supporting materials.*

I. Management & Planning Recommendations

- A. Need for comprehensive park planning – Due to its size and complexity, there is an inherent challenge in trying to have a parkwide comprehensive plan. However, such an effort would benefit the long-term stewardship and sustainability of the Park. In order to have a successful parkwide visitor education program, DEC managers and partners must have a solid implementation plan. To the extent possible, key stakeholders should be aligned and have a common goal to effectively reach park visitors with critical information. Given national trends in recreation participation growth, increased recreational use of the Park is highly likely in the future, and a comprehensive Park plan (including an outreach and education plan) is imperative.

- B. Utilize an established planning framework – Adirondack Park managers and partners could greatly benefit from working through a formal visitor use management planning process for the Park. This would allow for a better understanding of the carrying capacity of the Park as well as help to define complementary visitor experience opportunities and desired future resource conditions. There are numerous planning frameworks that could be utilized, and include:
 - *Visitor Use Management Framework* (the most contemporary and robust): <http://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/>
 - *Limits of Acceptable Change*: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/dbnf/home/?cid=stelprdb5346360>
 - *Visitor Experience and Resource Protection*: <http://winapps.umn.edu/winapps/media2/leopold/pubs/320F.pdf>

*Stewardship – the management necessary to preserve wilderness, natural resources, and access for current and future generations.

The use of any one of these (or similar) planning frameworks would greatly aid Park managers and partners in determining and attaining a specific desired future condition for the Park, and would be valuable for long-range strategic planning efforts.

- C. Build Leave No Trace into management plans – Consider building Leave No Trace into the Adirondack Park master planning documents, and Park project plans. Many federal and state land management agencies have built Leave No Trace (and stewardship concepts) into their long-range plans. See: https://www.nps.gov/acad/learn/management/upload/schoodic_gmpa.pdf Some municipal land management agencies have done this as well, including the City of Boulder, Colorado – Open Space and Mountain Parks Department and Travis County Parks (Texas). See https://www-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/osmpmp-final-1-201910221147.pdf?_ga=2.225274716.794717831.1574112296-111660396.1574112296; and https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/tnr/Docs/parks/2_parks_master_plan.pdf
- D. Codify Leave No Trace as guiding management principles – Consider drafting a formal resolution for the Adirondack Park pertaining to Leave No Trace. Some municipalities around the country have undertaken this kind of initiative with success. One example is the San Juan Islands in Washington State (mix of county, state, and federal lands). The municipality passed such a Leave No Trace resolution, which is leading to greater awareness and adoption of Leave No Trace, and ultimately a reduction in recreation-related impacts. See appendix I
- E. Ensure adequate staffing for Park management agencies – A perennial challenge for park and protected areas is adequate staffing. Local, state, and federal agencies all face this issue. When agencies are understaffed, parks and protected areas often suffer from avoidable impacts, many of which may be directly related to recreation and use. Though volunteers can fill the roles of some agency personnel, a well-funded and adequately staffed agency will generally be better suited to meet the growing demands on public outdoor spaces such as the Adirondack Park. Clearly there is a fiscal implication to adding staff which must be sorted out to ensure the necessary staffing resources are in place.
- F. Permit system for high use areas – Though not an appropriate option for every location, permit systems, when well thought out, well designed, and soundly implemented, can serve an important function in parks and protected areas. Depending on the nature of the resource in question, permitting use can benefit the natural resources and the visitor experience. Additionally, a permit system allows for an educational touch point with visitors before they depart on their trip. Many parks and protected areas have existing permit systems in place such as Great Smoky Mountains National Park. According to the National Park Service, visitors benefit from the system in several ways: *“Through a combination of education and enforcement, park rangers assigned exclusively to the backcountry are expected to lead to better compliance with regulations and Leave No Trace ethics. Increased*

compliance with regulations and Leave No Trace also helps protect and preserve resources, such as wildlife, that most visitors highly value. All backcountry users stand to benefit from the changes [to the permit system in the park]. In addition, by making all sites reservation-only, the new reservation system will have the capability to notify permit holders of site closures, safety issues and other emergency conditions via email and text messaging prior to beginning their trip.” See:

<https://www.nps.gov/grsm/learn/management/bc-reservation-permit-faq.htm> For more information on the implementation and use of permit systems, see: https://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/Content/documents/highres_VUM%20Framework_Edition%201_IVUMC.pdf

- G. Revise group use permitting system – Though there is a current system in place for the issuance of group use permits, it could be enhanced to be more efficient, provide a robust educational opportunity for the group prior to their visit, and could yield valuable group use data for DEC and its partners. Understanding and managing group use should be a priority for the Park as groups seeking permits offer many benefits including: educational and regulatory touch points with specific groups that use the Park; ability to collect reliable data on group use; and an opportunity to monitor resource conditions at sites used by groups.

- H. When providing alternatives to the High Peaks, ensure such areas are capable of handling the increased visitation – A well-utilized strategy by land managers is to direct visitors to other areas of a park or protected area that offer similar visitor experiences, challenges, or natural environments. One of the difficult issues with this strategy is ensuring such alternative areas are capable of handling the increased impacts associated with recreation. In the case of the Adirondack Park, some current suggested alternatives appear to be under resourced to accommodate the additional influx of visitors. Lack of parking spaces, limited availability of toilet facilities, trails not designed for heavy use, and a significant lack of visitor education are a sampling of the current problems faced by many of the suggested alternatives. Other parks have successfully used this strategy by conducting assessments of potential alternatives to ensure they can in fact cope with additional recreational use prior to offering them to the public. Consider cataloging existing recommended alternatives to determine if infrastructure or educational programming are lacking. Identified gaps should be remedied and addressed to the extent possible. Areas being considered as new alternatives should be assessed for overall suitability before locations go public.

- I. Build on successful management efforts – The DEC and its partners have demonstrated success with several efforts in the Park to minimize recreation-related impacts, e.g. implementation of the bear canister regulations for the High Peaks, check stations designed to minimize the spread of invasive species through the movement of firewood and boats, etc. Such efforts could be further enhanced and built upon for continued success in order to effectively minimize and mitigate visitor impacts in the Park. This is particularly salient now as reinvention of the

wheel is time consuming, resource intensive, and often impractical, whereas building on existing successful efforts can be far more efficient, effective, and timely.

II. Research & Monitoring Recommendations

- A. Baseline and ongoing monitoring data is essential for park management – Adirondack Park managers and partners would benefit from obtaining baseline data on current resource conditions in the Park. There are numerous methodologies, from simple to complex, for gathering baseline data. Baseline data could be collected by relatively simple photo documentation, GPS data, or other means. However, there are more complex methods for gathering robust baseline data if desired. Regardless, such data is extremely useful for monitoring change in conditions over time, and can serve as an effective metric for guiding management efforts. See: [https://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/Content/documents/highres_trifold Monitoring Guidebook Primer Edition One IVUMC.pdf](https://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/Content/documents/highres_trifold_Monitoring_Guidebook_Primer_Edition_One_IVUMC.pdf)
- B. Collect data on visitor numbers – Implementation of a system for capturing baseline Park visitation on an annual basis would greatly benefit overall management efforts. An understanding of visitation numbers, patterns, seasonal variation, and visitor type would augment educational outreach efforts by allowing for a targeted approach. Additionally, having information on annual visitation, including peak visitation, would allow for better management of the inevitable spikes in visitor use throughout the year. There are numerous visitor count methodologies, which can be tailored to a particular park system, or an individual park. See: http://agriflifecd.tamu.edu/cromptonrpts/files/2011/06/3_2_5.pdf and http://www.fs.fed.us/ne/newtown_square/publications/technical_reports/pdfs/2004/317papers/kaczynski317.pdf
- C. Gain an empirical understanding of visitor perceptions – As recreation in the Park is promoted, and correspondingly increases over time due to a variety of factors (marketing, social media, promotion, etc.), it would be useful for the managers and partners to determine what visitor perceptions are with regard to the level of impact found in the Park. Do visitors feel that the Park is “being loved to death?” Or do they feel the Park provides high-quality recreational experiences? An understanding of baseline visitor perceptions of the Park allows for the implementation of appropriate management and educational strategies, which can help ensure the predetermined future condition of the Park. See: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287234314 Studies in Outdoor Recreation Search and Research for Satisfaction](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287234314_Studies_in_Outdoor_Recreation_Search_and_Research_for_Satisfaction)
- D. Use citizen science to gather current impact data throughout the Park – Data collected via citizen scientists could be used to generate visual representations of impacts such as heat maps (for information on heat maps see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heat_map) of impact to allow for a more strategic approach to improving education for specific impact issues. This could facilitate a fundamental shift from being reactive to being proactive. Such an effort could be yet

another ‘challenge’ event to gather meaningful data for the Park. The program could offer recognition similar to other Park challenges. Alternatively, this kind of program could be initially administered by a graduate student to assess the efficacy and viability of such an effort.

- E. Consider reinvigorating Adirondack All-Taxa Biodiversity Inventory or other ‘bio blitz’ events to engage citizen scientists and gather valuable data in a central repository – Both public and private entities have been successfully utilizing bio blitzes for a number of years to engage the public in the protection of parks and protected areas. From National Geographic, “A *BioBlitz* is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time. At a BioBlitz, scientists, families, students, teachers, and other community members work together to get a snapshot of an area’s biodiversity. These events can happen in most any geography—urban, rural, or suburban—in areas as small as a backyard or as large as a country. Smartphone technologies and apps such as *iNaturalist* make collecting photographs and biological information about living things easy as part of a BioBlitz. High quality data uploaded to *iNaturalist* become part of the *Global Biodiversity Information Facility*, an open source database used by scientists and policy makers around the world.” The National Park Service has also been utilizing these events with great success. See: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/biodiversity/national-parks-bioblitz.htm> <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/citscitoolkit/projects/cfab/adirondackatbi/>
- F. Map all locations where there are currently stewards in the Park – Such a mapping exercise will allow for the accurate identification of where on-the-ground stewards are located, and therefore where gaps exist. Identification of caretakers and stewards at summits, visitor centers, trailheads, etc. will provide a more meaningful picture of current ‘boots on the ground,’ and will allow for real-time programmatic enhancements, better deployment of existing resources, and identification of areas not currently served by on-the-ground stewards. Should new areas in need of an on-site steward be identified, this information could be leveraged to engage new individuals or groups interested in stewardship of the Park.

III. Tourism & Marketing Recommendations

- A. Establish partnership with I Love NY, ROOST, and other tourism entities – Research has shown that most outdoor enthusiasts first encounter Leave No Trace information in a park or protected area (from various sources: rangers, signage, etc.). While there are benefits to people being reached on-site in parks, there is also the issue that the information may be coming too late in the 5-step process of a recreational experience to actually make a difference (at least for that visit). The 5-steps of recreational experiences include: 1) *anticipation* – this involves trip planning and preparation; 2) *travel to* – the physical act of traveling to a park or protected area whether it’s just across town or across the country; 3) *on-site* – individuals are actually in a park, engaged in various forms of recreation; 4) *travel back* – the physical act of traveling back home; and 5) *reflection* – taking stock of the

experience, posting photos to social feeds, blogging, sharing the adventure with family or friends. Given this 5-step process, the ideal time to reach outdoor enthusiast with Leave No Trace information is in the *anticipation* phase as they're planning their outing. When people are reached earlier in the planning process there is a greater likelihood that they will be better prepared for their outing, which generally means they will also create less impact. Tourism entities have significant influence on public lands visitation throughout the US, and the Adirondack Park is a prime example of a park that could greatly benefit from having strong partnerships with the tourism industry. When potential visitors are reached via tourism partners in the trip anticipation phase, they are likely to be better informed and prepared for a visit to the Park. Colorado was the first state in the US to create a specific, focused partnership between the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) and the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. For information on this partnership see the following:

- <https://www.colorado.com/articles/leave-no-trace-care-colorado>
- https://www.colorado.com/sites/default/files/CO_LNTBrochure_8.pdf
- <https://www.colorado.com/videos/care-colorado>
- <https://industry.colorado.com/care-colorado-principles-toolkit#>
- https://industry.colorado.com/sites/default/files/BB_Stewardship.pdf
- <https://www.colorado.com/news/colorado-tourism-office-and-leave-no-trace-center-outdoor-ethics-join-ground-breaking>

- B. Leverage the unique nature of the Park to drive stewardship – The Adirondack Park is incredibly unique in the world of parks and protected areas, e.g. size, management, large Wilderness areas, Forever Wild protection, patchwork of public/private land, open to many uses (consumptive, non-consumptive, motorized, non-motorized, etc.), incredible history, etc. As such, these individual attributes or the unique nature of the Park as a whole should be utilized as a leverage point for not only encouraging but actively driving stewardship efforts in the Park. Many units of the National Park Service utilize a similar strategy when working to encourage stewardship. See examples from Yellowstone National Park (the world's first national park): <https://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/index.htm> In this NPS-created video, the Park Service specifically notes the attributes of the Park that set it apart from all others, and explicitly address the notion that park visitors should not only enjoy the park but learn about it and do something to care for it. The Adirondack Park should employ a similar strategy given that the Park is truly one-of-a-kind.
- C. Develop and widely advertise an Adirondack Stewardship Pledge – Stewardship pledges have become more common over the past several years. They're being

utilized for not only parks and protected areas but also for special destinations. The use of pledges is a type of social marketing that is intended to influence behavior. The Adirondack Park could likely benefit from a park-specific pledge. Such an initiative could have numerous benefits: engage the public, provide information on responsible enjoyment of the park, encourage and foster on-the-ground stewardship, promote and educate visitors about Leave No Trace, and could generate a larger following on social media channels. See examples of existing pledges that could be replicated:

- <https://palaupledge.com>
- <https://www.inspiredbyiceland.com/icelandicpledge>
- <https://www.aspenchamber.org/pledge>
- <https://www.pledgewild.com> – this is an excellent example of a group of mountain towns in the western US coming together to promote responsible tourism.
- <https://www.nps.gov/zion/planyourvisit/zion-pledge.htm>
- <https://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/yellowstonepledge.htm>
- <https://www.nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/rockypledge.htm>
- <https://www.nps.gov/grca/getinvolved/grand-canyon-pledge.htm>
- <https://www.wmf.org/sustainable-tourism-pledge>

See also recent articles on the use of pledges:

- <https://www.adventuretravelnews.com/success-of-responsible-tourism-pledges-falls-on-destinations-not-travelers>
- <https://www.fastcompany.com/90379126/6-american-cities-ask-for-responsible-tourism-pledge>

- D. Assess current cross-border marketing and advertising aimed at Canadians – Given the significant number of Canadian visitors to the High Peaks region it would be advised to consider both exploring current cross-border marketing efforts and developing (or enhancing) a plan for better reaching these visitors before they come to the Park. Determining the current information sources these visitors use to plan their visits would be useful and could be accomplished via internet research or on-site visitor surveys. Having an understanding of the various options for reaching this

community of Park visitors would allow for more effective and timely communication and marketing regarding responsible enjoyment of the Adirondacks.

- E. Continue to work with opinion leaders in the region – A strategy that has been effective in shedding light on recreation-related impacts for many municipal, state, and national parks and protected areas is the engagement and enlistment of local or regional “opinion leaders” to help bring attention and action to a problem. If DEC or its partners can identify a suite of opinion leaders, e.g. the leader of a well-known hiking group or club, leading members of popular Adirondack Challenges, or corporate or governmental entities including such influential figures/entities, this can help generate broad support and awareness for the Park.

IV. Social Media Recommendations

- A. Establish and follow a comprehensive social media strategy for the Park – It is clear that social media plays a role in driving visitation to public lands. Additionally, social media has the power to influence behavior of outdoor enthusiasts. When harnessed, social media can be an excellent tool for engaging tens of thousands or even millions of people. However, in the absence of coordinated social media effort, effectiveness is likely limited. There are numerous advantages to having a social media strategy, which include: a) a strategy for social media provides clear direction for efforts, especially for such a large park; b) a strategy will allow for assessing the metrics of social media efforts and will also allow for better reporting and improvements over time; c) a strategy allows for greater efficiency in utilizing and managing social media; d) a strategy can ensure ongoing, continuous, and consistent activity on various social platforms to keep content fresh, relevant, and coordinated; e) a strategy can allow for loftier and more effective campaigns or specific activations; and, lastly; f) a strategy will keep social media on track as it should contain information and procedures for posting, replying to the audience, dealing with questions, addressing adulation or negative comments, and responding to complaints. Such a strategy for the Park must be broad in scope, and should be as inclusive as possible to engage many partners to participate thereby providing a level of consistent social media throughout the Park.
- B. Partner with social media influencers – Social media is only as good as the follower base of any particular user (agency, NGO, club, individual, etc.). *Social influencer marketing* is a tactic that is heavily used today by many, and is simply “leveraging the follower base of influencers” for specific purposes – sales, donations, support, volunteerism, etc. The use of marketing through social media influencers has many benefits: it is considered a light-handed approach that doesn’t feel aggressive to the end user like some traditional marketing efforts; influencers meticulously build and curate their follower base so often social influencers are viewed as a credible source; social influencer marketing can, over time, lift Search Engine Optimization (SEO); lastly, social influencer marketing can foster meaningful online exchanges that can engage many in a topic of specific interest. Identifying and collaborating with social influencers in New York and the broader Adirondack region to champion

Leave No Trace and/or stewardship efforts in the Park could be an effectual strategy for building a stronger sustainability culture for the Adirondacks.

- C. Consider the use of social media as a monitoring tool – Some land managers are now monitoring social media feeds and platforms daily to draw real-time data from social posts. Often the recreating public is aware of issues before the land manager, and social media has become an important tool for managers. Examples of issues that managers are being made aware of via social channels include human-wildlife conflict, dangerous wildlife, dangerous trail conditions, user conflict, accidents, and wildfire.

V. Partnerships & Coordination Recommendations

- A. Create (or reinvigorate) an Adirondack Park Wildlands Stewardship Committee – The creation of an Adirondack Park Wildlands Stewardship Committee would greatly benefit Leave No Trace efforts in the Park. A committee that has park-wide representation, not just the High Peaks or hikers, would be an effective way to better coordinate marketing, social media, outreach, education, and training for the Park. Such a committee should include non-motorized users such as hikers, climbers, paddlers, anglers, mountain bikers, trail runners, skiers, etc. as well as motorized users (e.g. snowmobilers, boaters, ATV riders, etc.) and others such as hunters that utilize the public and private lands of the Park. Furthermore, a committee of this kind would be well served by having NGO representation, agency representation, and representatives from the municipalities within the Park. Consider a subcommittee structure – education, social media, citizen science, research, training, etc. The overarching purpose of such a committee would be to drive stewardship efforts in the Park in a coordinated and organized fashion, and would allow for the identification of specific success metrics as visitation to the Park continues to increase.
- B. Examine existing DEC partnerships to enhance stewardship efforts – The DEC currently has many partnership agreements with myriad entities in the Park. Some of these existing partnerships involve the use and dissemination of Leave No Trace to Park visitors. However, there are likely opportunities that have yet to be identified by DEC and all of its partners for better promoting responsible enjoyment of the Park. To the extent possible, the DEC should review current partnerships and identify opportunities for providing minimum impact information to the populations the various partners respectively serve. The more existing partnerships can be leveraged in a mutually beneficial way to promote a consistent stewardship message, the more people that can be reached over time.
- C. Work more closely with the NY Governor’s Office to promote responsible recreation in the Park – Given the NY Governor’s interest in the Adirondack Park, his office should be engaged to help promote responsible enjoyment of the Park. Every message coming from the Governor’s Office about the Park should include a message about wildlands stewardship and Leave No Trace. As the chief executive of

the state, the Governor has a tremendous opportunity to reach millions of people in order to help protect the Adirondacks. Consideration should be given to inviting the Governor to the Park for a tour of areas where recreation-related impact is most significant so he and his staff can see firsthand the challenges faced by DEC and its partners in the Park. Greater awareness of the issues faced by the Park could be the spark that leads to increased funding, attention, and resources for the Park. Given the significance of the Park as an economic driver for the state, this should be a high priority if the Park is to be enjoyed in perpetuity.

VI. Group Use & Adirondack ‘Challenges’ Recommendations

- A. Require (or strongly recommend) inclusion of Leave No Trace in every Park challenge – All challenges (46ers, Cranberry Lake 50, Fire Tower Challenge, Saranac Lake 6er, etc.) that currently take place in the Park should be required to include Leave No Trace information for challenge participants. Web-based information as well as the specific inclusion of Leave No Trace into such challenges should be strongly recommended and/or required. These challenges are operating on public lands and have a responsibility to minimize the impact of participation. Furthermore, many challenge participants may be drawn to the Park for other types of recreation and educating all participants across all challenges could further the Leave No Trace ethic in the Park. In a review of more than ten Adirondack challenge websites, it was found that virtually no Leave No Trace information exists on the websites. Each of these challenges has a significant opportunity to reach thousands if not millions of Park visitors over time. As such, this represents an immediate opportunity for visitor education.
- B. Create Leave No Trace guidelines for challenges – The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics routinely works with partners to create tailored Leave No Trace messaging and curriculum. Such an effort could be easily undertaken to ensure that all challenges in the Park have the necessary information to promote responsible enjoyment of the Park. The information could be featured on each challenges’ website, and could even be made part of the challenge itself.
- C. All “Challenge” events/programs in the Park should actively promote Leave No Trace – Not only should challenges be required (or strongly recommended) to include Leave No Trace on their websites but they should actively be promoting Leave No Trace as part of their public outreach and marketing. As it currently exists in the Park, this is a significant missed opportunity to reach many people.
- D. Conduct a survey of challenge takers – Challenge takers would have to participate in a short survey before they could receive their recognition (e.g. patch, certificate, etc.) to gather data on why they’re taking the challenge, what their motivation is, if they are specifically goal-focused, etc. With this data, specific messaging could be developed to better resonate with challenge participants regarding their role in taking care of the Park.

- E. Implement a group notification system – Consider the implementation of a group notification system such as the one utilized by the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) in the White Mountains and the Mahoosuc Range. The AMC implemented this system to better manage the high overnight use of sites. From the AMC, *“To better manage these public wildlands so that all hikers continue to experience an uncivilized forest, we must receive pre-notification from large groups concerning which sites they plan to use. Proper use of the Group Notification System helps to prevent multiple groups from converging at a campsite on a given night and exceeding site capacity. This simple action helps us work together to lessen impacts on these beautiful areas, minimize overcrowding, and increase everyone’s enjoyment of the backcountry. However, this notification is not a formal reservation. All sites are managed on a first-come, first-served basis. We hope that use of the Group Notification System will prevent the need for a more formalized reservation system, which would mean more regulations and fees. Your compliance helps us protect the resources we all value!”* For more information on this system, see: <https://www.outdoors.org/lodging-camping/lodging-camping-campsites/campsites-notification> Such a system in the Adirondack Park could be a very effective way to manage group use without having to move to a formal reservation system. Furthermore, the data collected through this type of system could be valuable for predicting trends in group use, tracking group use, monitoring impacts, and addressing issues resulting from group use in the Park.

VII. Outreach & Education Recommendations

- A. Create a consistent, cohesive educational plan for the Park – Compared to other lands used by the public for recreation, the Adirondack Park currently appears to be receiving a similar amount of recreation-related resource and social impact. Level of existing impact is important because timing is key to implementing successful visitor education programs. The sooner a program is implemented, the better off the Park will be in the future, i.e. when possible, having an education program in place prior to (or concurrent with) the opening of the new trails (e.g. new Mt. Van Hoevenberg trail) or other recreational amenities (e.g. Frontier Town) will help ensure effectiveness of outreach and educational efforts. It is often easier to deal with problems in a nascent stage rather than trying to address deeply-rooted resource or social impacts. As such, the Center strongly recommends the immediate implementation of comprehensive Leave No Trace educational efforts Parkwide to begin minimizing and mitigating existing and future impacts.
- B. Catalog existing rules, regulations, and educational messages in the Park – Currently, the lists of rules and regulations are not readily visible or consistent on kiosks throughout the Park, and Leave No Trace-type information is essentially non-existent in much Park-related literature. This is a relatively easy fix, but something that should be remedied over time in order to consistently promote responsible and sustainable enjoyment of the Park. One way to address this would be for an intern or graduate student to document existing messages (regulatory and educational)

being used in the Park to better understand the gaps in overall messaging. From there a plan could be created to foster consistency across the Park.

- C. Ensure consistency of signage – Some of the more important signage currently found in the Park should be made more prominent and consistent across the Park. When signage does not have an official look or feel, it can lead to non-compliance. Make all signage as permanent as possible. Generally speaking, more permanent signage has a more authentic, authoritative, and legitimate feel. For more information on visitor perceptions of signs, see:
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Yu_Fai_Leung/publication/260165571_From_country_visitor_information_education_programs_Are_there_lessons_for_wilderness_links/0a85e5367ce676a965000000.pdf
- D. Identify and capitalize on missed opportunities to reach Park visitors – While there are active visitor education efforts in many parts of the Park, there are also many more opportunities that have yet to be capitalized on. From agencies, to locations such as the VIC (Paul Smith’s College), to the various Challenges in the park, as well as locations like the I-87 exit 17 rest stop, and information on shuttle vehicles, there are many potential opportunities to better educate Park visitors on enjoying the Adirondacks responsibly. Furthermore, there are numerous publications that should be engaged in this effort as they reach many visitors of all types in the Park. A cursory review of possibilities includes:
- NY State Camping Guide
 - Town of Webb Trail System map
 - I Love NY Roadmap
 - Frontier Town literature, e.g. “Equestrian Opportunities Near Frontier Town”
 - Old Forge Summer Fun Guide
 - Adirondack Sports
 - All Adirondack-focused I Love NY Guides – Capital Saratoga Region, Season to Season visitor guide, I Love NY Travel Guide, I Love NY New York State Travel Highlights, etc.
 - VIC Summer Programs Guide
 - Adirondacks Fishing Guide
 - Adirondacks Paddling Guide
 - DEC – Your NYS Camping Adventure (good information but call it “Leave No Trace”)
 - Old Forge Snowmobile Trail Map
 - All DEC day use and campground maps, e.g. Limekiln Lake, Alger Island, Nicks Lake, Fish Creek Pond, etc.
 - www.ReserveAmerica.com for campground reservations

An intern at one of the colleges or universities in or near the Park, an agency or NGO intern, or even a dedicated volunteer could undertake such a project. Knowing what opportunities exists, that are not currently being capitalized on, will allow for a

targeted and strategic effort to maximize and utilize all available outreach opportunities.

- E. PSAR education efforts – According to the DEC there are accurate statistics on the number of search and rescue operations (SAR) that occur in the Park. Given the increase in SAR in the past few years there appears to be a need (and an opportunity) to develop a Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR) educational effort and/or program with the goal of reaching park visitors about being prepared and staying safe *before* they venture into the backcountry of the Park. Such a program would need to be coordinated across the Park, and could involve a wide variety of partners that could all promote a single PSAR message. See example of successful PSAR efforts at Grand Canyon National Park:

- https://www.nps.gov/articles/parkscience33-1_99-107_malcolm_heinrich_3864.htm
- https://www.nps.gov/grca/learn/photosmultimedia/hike_smart-01.htm

For research on the topic, see:

Malcolm, C., Hannah, H., & Pearce, E. (2014). Effectiveness of preventative search and rescue: illness and injury prevention and fiscal impact. *Wilderness & Environmental Medicine*, 25(3), 355-356.

Collins, Ethan G. and Pettengill, Peter R. (2019). Analysis of Search and Rescue Incidents in the Adirondack State Park from 2015-2016. *Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies*, 23, 49-59

- F. Replicate successful existing outreach efforts – There are numerous existing outreach efforts in the Park (e.g. HPIC at ADK, summer invasive species/boat inspection stewards, fire tower stewards, etc.) that could be replicated over time. Given the documented effectiveness of these kinds of efforts, it would be beneficial and more efficient to enhance and expand on proven outreach models rather than to create new ones out of whole cloth. Furthermore, it may initially be easier to raise the necessary funds to replicate efforts that have generate desired outcomes rather than fund untested education and outreach mechanisms.
- G. Tailor DEC website to what visitors are searching for most – While there are good resources on the DEC's current website, a review utilizing Google Analytics or a third-party auditor of the most visited pages would allow for the agency to better tailor the website to current Park visitors. Once the DEC has a better understanding of what website pages visitors are searching for or viewing, that information can then be located (or relocated) to more accessible locations on the website. Making the most searched for information better available and more easily located would

greatly benefit visitors to the DEC website when searching for information on responsible and sustainable enjoyment of the Park.

- H. Search Engine Optimization – When searching the internet for information on the Adirondack Park, the most prominent websites are largely tourism-focused websites (this is a significant marketing/outreach opportunity) and the DEC website isn't found until the second page of a Google search. As such, the DEC should work with search engine optimization (SEO) experts to enhance the searchability of the DEC's website given the agency's role in the management and protection of the Park. Based on a cursory review of some of the Park-related websites that are found via Google, very few provide information on responsible enjoyment (i.e. Leave No Trace) of the Park, and none were found that detailed the rules and regulations for the Park. Search engine optimization could help remedy this situation and make the DEC's website a prominent and easily-accessed source of information for the Park.
- I. Create a singular website for the High Peaks – Because of the intense and growing use of the High Peaks, DEC and its partners in the High Peaks should consider a single website for the area that could serve as the comprehensive and definitive information source for those wishing to visit. Such a site could be in both English and French to accommodate visitors from both the US and Canada. There are currently numerous websites that provide information about the High Peaks which creates inconsistencies from one site to the next. A quick search on www.networksolutions.com reveals that potential URLs such as www.adkpeaks.org (or .net), www.nyhighpeaks.org (or .net) and www.adkhighpeaks.org (or .net) are all currently available. Having one website dedicated to this special region of the Park would be an excellent way to help ensure that visitors to the High Peaks could have access to accurate and timely information to the area.
- J. Publicize existing shuttle services – There are some shuttle services in the Park that have been implemented to remedy the myriad parking issues managers and partners are currently dealing with in the Adirondacks. While well intentioned, such services are virtually useless unless Park visitors know about the services. The DEC and its partners should catalog all existing shuttle services and widely promote them and the benefits they provide. All visitors should be encouraged to use these services to benefit the Park and the experience it is intended to provide. For research on shuttle services in parks and protected areas, see:
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0966692313000525>
 - <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=684539079697772;res=IELBUS>
 - <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00267-006-0061-9>

- K. Catalog the top 50 (or 100) educational opportunities in the Park – Consider utilizing an intern or student (undergraduate or graduate) to identify and catalog the top 50–100 educational opportunities in the Park that are *not* currently being utilized. From outfitter and guide services to retailers to hotel and lodging to restaurants and bars, there are many potential opportunities for reaching visitors that have yet to be taken advantage of. However, without a better understanding of the opportunities that exist it will be challenging to create a plan for ensuring the dissemination of consistent Leave No Trace or other park information through such outlets.
- L. Ensure Leave No Trace is part of relevant college orientation programs, courses, and outing programs – There are numerous colleges and universities that provide a variety of programming in the Park offering meaningful opportunities to reach students (and staff) with Leave No Trace information for the Park. DEC and its partners should reach out to all known colleges and universities that operate in the Park in some capacity to ensure they are providing Leave No Trace to their participants before and during any visit.

VIII. Training Recommendations

- A. Specific training for DEC staff and rangers – Consider sending DEC Forest Ranger, ECOs, and Lands and Forests staff to targeted training on proper use of the *Authority of the Resource Technique*, a proven method for effectively interacting with Park visitors about Leave No Trace and similar stewardship concepts. This training is often coupled with *Effective Communication* training, which is designed for staff and volunteers who routinely interface with Park visitors. This particular training module is generally a 4-hour training but can be tailored to a particular audience for maximum effectiveness. Contact the Center for additional details. For information on the Authority of the Resource technique, see: https://lnt.org/sites/default/files/ART_Wallace_Original.pdf
- B. Entities operating under a Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA) should be trained in Leave No Trace – Any entity operating on state lands as a volunteer with DEC has the opportunity to provide Leave No Trace education, whether it is explicitly in their mission (such as Front Country Stewards) or not (such as volunteer trail crews). Organizers could be required to have Leave No Trace Awareness training (a 1-day or shorter formal Leave No Trace training) at a minimum. The Leave No Trace Center offers a FREE online Leave No Trace Awareness Course that participants could take. Upon successful completion, participants receive a certificate of completion, which could be submitted as part of the VSA application or renewal application.
- C. Summer camp staff should be trained in Leave No Trace – There are countless summer camps (both day and resident) in the Adirondack Park. Camps represent a tremendous opportunity to reach both camp staff and youth with Leave No Trace in an outdoor context. The Leave No Trace Center has a robust suite of camp-focused

educational curriculum and programs that are effective at increasing Leave No Trace knowledge in camp participants as well as influencing youth behavior to better align with Leave No Trace in the outdoors. For more information, see:

- <https://lnt.org/our-work/youth-education/>
- <https://lnt.org/our-work/youth-education/accreditation/>
- <https://lnt.org/our-work/youth-education/youth-educator-library/>
- <https://lnt.org/our-work/youth-education/things-to-do/>

- D. Make Leave No Trace a required component of NY Guide Licensure – Currently there are approximately 2,500 licensed guides in New York, which represents a tremendous opportunity to educate a professional community about Leave No Trace that has a significant reach in the Adirondack Park. Outfitter and guide services often cater to beginners or novices who are interested in learning new outdoor activities. As such, guides are teaching specific skills and Leave No Trace should be one of those skills that is imparted to every individual or group that is served by a NY DEC Licensed Guide. Furthermore, all NY Guides should be required to have Leave No Trace Awareness training (a 1-day or shorter formal Leave No Trace training) at a minimum. The Leave No Trace Center offers a FREE online Leave No Trace Awareness Course that all guides could take. Upon successful completion, participant receive a certificate. That certificate of completion could be submitted as part of the guide license application or the renewal application. Lastly, the NY Guide exam could easily incorporate Leave No Trace to ensure that all licensed guides are aware of how to minimize the impact of their guiding service and pass along the information to their clients. See: <https://lnt.org/get-involved/training-courses/online-awareness-course/>

IX. Dept. of Environmental Conservation Recommendations

- A. DEC work with media/outdoor industry media – DEC has a tremendous opportunity to expand its outreach and engagement with outdoor industry media entities that are promoting the Adirondack Park. These kinds of influencers can play a key role in promoting responsible enjoyment of the Park. An internet search reveals numerous media outlets that are heavily promoting the Park yet provide little to no information on responsible enjoyment of the areas they're promoting. A few examples include: www.lonelyplanet.com; www.visittheusa.com; www.tripadvisor.com; www.alltrails.com; www.outside.com; www.backpacker.com; www.wikipedia.com; www.adirondackexplorer.com; www.outdoorproject.com, as well as many others.
- B. Include Leave No Trace in the DEC Ranger Academy – The DEC's Environmental Conservation Police Officer and Forest Ranger Basic Training academy should

include a robust Leave No Trace component. Given the role of ECOs and Forest Rangers in the protection of the Park, interaction with the public is a key part of the scope of work for these crucial staff. Ensuring that ECOs and Rangers are equipped with Leave No Trace will allow them to pass along critical information to outdoor enthusiasts they interface with throughout the course of their duties. Research has shown that visitors to public lands often first learn about Leave No Trace from a ranger. As such, it is imperative that DEC field staff are well-versed in Leave No Trace skills and ethics.

- C. Create a DEC Junior Ranger Program – Consider the development of an Adirondack Park Junior Ranger Program that contains a Leave No Trace component. Such programs are widely utilized by the federal land management agencies, and by some state agencies as well. Generally, these programs are structured to engage youth ages 5 – 15 but some encourage participation of adults of any age as well. The majority of these kinds of programs include Leave No Trace activities and associated educational opportunities. The National Park Service has an excellent Jr. Ranger program that has been very successful in America’s national parks: <https://www.nps.gov/kids/junior-rangers.htm> Two other examples, one from Texas State Parks: https://tpwd.texas.gov/spdest/programs/jr_ranger/ and the other from California State Parks: http://kids.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=22783 These kinds of programs are easy to replicate, do an excellent job of engaging youth, and have added benefits such as parental involvement (and subsequent learning). This type of program could be rolled out Parkwide in the Adirondacks, and could help foster the next generation of Park stewards.
- D. Enforcement of existing regulations – DEC managers should explore options for greater enforcement of rules and regulations in the Park. If the applicable rules and regulations cannot be enforced adequately, managers will have to rely solely on voluntary compliance, which has been shown to be low for some issues. Additionally, DEC could consider developing a matrix for organizing those impacts in the Park that are best suited to law enforcement and those that could effectively be addressed through educational efforts. Such a matrix would allow DEC staff to be judicious with its resources, and foster a more targeted approach to managing, mitigating, and minimizing impacts in the Park through both education and law enforcement.

X. Infrastructure Recommendations

- A. Technological/infrastructure solutions – DEC and its partners will need to further explore which kind of infrastructure and facilities are, or will be, necessary to provide the intended visitor experience. This infrastructure can be used as an effective management tool, e.g. parking areas can be designed to limit visitation based on number of parking spaces, high-traffic areas can be hardened to minimize trampling effects, campsites can be built to contain and minimize impacts, etc. Though education is effective, technical solutions such as infrastructure, are

necessary and appropriate at times to manage high visitor use and recreation-related impacts. See:

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jeffrey-Marion/publication/242240482_Managing_Visitor_Impacts_in_Parks_A_Multi-Method_Study_of_the_Effectiveness_of_Alternative_Management_Practices/links/02e7e53a037ba53d93000000/Managing-Visitor-Impacts-in-Parks-A-Multi-Method-Study-of-the-Effectiveness-of-Alternative-Management-Practices.pdf

- B. Consider establishing actual visitor center(s) for the Park – Though a few “visitor centers” exist in the Park, there is not a formal visitor center (or suite of visitor centers) that offers a one-stop-shop for Park visitors. Federal and state land managers routinely utilize visitor centers to interact with visitors, provide education, interpretation, guest services, and resources (books, maps, equipment, etc.). DEC and its partners should evaluate the need for a single visitor center (or perhaps multiple) for the Park. NYSDOT data shows that the majority of visitors access the Park through a few key entry points, which makes the idea of formal visitor centers potentially more feasible. Given that there is no single entry point for the Park, coupled with the fact that the Park has a porous boundary, an assessment should determine the feasibility of truly utilizing such facilities for education and outreach purposes among other things.

Specific Recommended Methods and Tactics for Educating Adirondack Park Visitors About Leave No Trace and Responsible Enjoyment of the Park

- Brochures – Distribute at visitor centers and natural areas or individual pilot sites – tailored Leave No Trace educational information that could be distributed at trailheads, manager and partner offices, or other recreation sites, the Chambers of Commerce or tourism partners in the Park and surrounding communities, other governmental offices, local outdoor retail shops, through NGO partners, the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Adirondack Council, other key partners and stakeholders, and at other venues throughout the Park.
- Trailhead/Park Signage – When done correctly, signage can be an effective tool for disseminating information to Park users. The information contained on signs would need to be consistent with other outreach methods, and would provide locally relevant information. Placement of signage and kiosk can be an important factor (the Center can provide more information on this depending on local variables, constraints, and impacts). Given the vast and dispersed nature of the Park, and potential staff limitations, signs can be an effective management strategy for providing Leave No Trace information as well as rules, regulations, and other area-specific information. One key is the need to have *consistent* signage throughout the Park in order to best reach visitors repeatedly with stewardship messages.
- Information on Park Maps – Locally tailored to cover the entire Park or even specific parts of the Park. Information could be further tailored to a specific activity or user group.
- Website – Consistent information across the manager/partner spectrum, possibly including a link to the Leave No Trace website so visitors can get even more information if they so desire, can be a critical educational tool. Web-based information should be the most up-to-date given the ease and relative low cost of updating. Consider having a specific Leave No Trace section of agency and partner websites similar to what most national parks, many state parks, and numerous municipalities have:

<https://www.nps.gov/olym/planyourvisit/wilderness-leave-no-trace.htm>;

<https://austintexas.gov/leavenotrace>;

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/lnt.aspx>; and

<http://stateparks.mt.gov/protect-and-respect/leaveNoTrace.html>

- Continue to coordinate public Service Announcements – A new topic each week/month/season/year – “Tips for Leaving No Trace in the Adirondack Park.” PSAs could be distributed through a variety of outlets – agency and partner websites, local print and digital media, regional media, NGOs, social media, etc.

- Staff Training – Provide training for appropriate agency and partner staff – from the 1-hour Leave No Trace Awareness Workshop to the 2-day Leave No Trace Trainer Course, to the 5-day Leave No Trace Master Educator Course (the Adirondack Mountain Club is an approved Master Educator Course Provider). Allow staff and key partners the opportunity to learn more about Leave No Trace, the science behind it, and how to effectively teach it. Such training could be a critical component of the overall Leave No Trace efforts in the Park.
- Training for key partners, volunteers, or interested individuals – Leave No Trace Training could be provided by agency/partner staff or other appropriate volunteers for the general public, volunteer groups, school groups, etc. This kind of training could engage existing Park supporters, and further build stronger stewardship efforts for the Park.
- Interpretive Walks/Presentations/Ranger Talks – These could be offered by DEC or partners on a weekly or monthly basis to teach locals, Park users, and tourists about the unique resources found in the Park at key locations, such as campgrounds and other DEC facilities. These educational methods offer turnkey opportunities for disseminating information about ways to minimize recreational impacts. These educational sessions help build a sense of “ownership” and foster stewardship in Park visitors and supporters. Consider building Leave No Trace into existing programs of this kind already being offered by DEC and other partners.
- Volunteer Programs – Programs such as *Adopt-a-Park* or *Friends of the High Peaks* could be very useful in this effort (assuming similar programs exist or can be created). Training (both Leave No Trace and Authority of the Resource) for volunteers is key so that they can effectively interact with park users regarding Leave No Trace at parking areas, trailheads, and at destinations. Currently, training requirements are mostly left to the organization holding the VSA (Volunteer Service Agreement). DEC could require all organizations holding VSAs to provide Leave No Trace training, either in person or via the FREE online Awareness Workshop.

Volunteer programs could be a very effective way to help manage visitor use, and provide meaningful public outreach and education. Research and best practice has demonstrated that volunteers can often make very worthwhile and lasting public contacts, given that their personal attachment to a particular park or natural area is on display when interacting with the recreating public rather than uniformed agency personnel. There is a great deal of strategy to ensuring that volunteers can be effectively utilized in parks and protected areas without compromising their personal safety. Additionally, volunteers must be deployed in areas that are more likely to benefit from such a presence, i.e. areas with recreation-related impacts such as pet waste, off-trail travel, wildlife feeding, etc. rather than those where illegal activities comprise the greatest management concerns.

- Interpretive Signage – Signage could be placed at strategic locations in and around the Park to educate users about the areas they are recreating in, the ecosystem function, and ways to protect such areas by using Leave No Trace skills and techniques, e.g. signage in riparian areas, historical features, critical wildlife habitat, sensitive plant habitat, etc. Research has shown that visitors are often more apt to protect what they understand. Such interpretive signage, when deployed in the right circumstance, can accomplish both raising awareness and imparting an effective stewardship message.
- Supplementary Outreach Methods:
 - ❖ An Adirondack Park-specific ethics reference card could be produced and distributed to Park visitors. These cards generally contain approximately 500 words of text, highlighting the key issues in an area, and specific techniques for minimizing impact in the area. The Center has utilized such cards for over 20 years with great success. They are relatively inexpensive (~\$0.20 per card), visitors generally like the cards, and they are often kept as either a keepsake/memento or an educational tool. The NYS DEC has previously had a standard language, but specifically Forest Ranger branded ethics card, which it distributed to the public. See appendix II
 - ❖ An Adirondack Park app for smart phone users could be created that would give pertinent Park information as well as relevant Leave No Trace information tailored to the Park.
 - ❖ Information could be posted on the back of restroom stall doors – captive audience.

Appendix I

RESOLUTION NO. 45 -2014

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING SAN JUAN COUNTY AS A VOLUNTARY "LEAVE NO TRACE" AREA AND ADOPTING THE "LEAVE NO TRACE" GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ETHIC TO SUPPORT STEWARDSHIP OF THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS

- A. A defining characteristic of San Juan County is the natural environment, both terrestrial and marine; and
- B. Protecting the natural environment is beneficial for all people, whether residing in or visiting San Juan County; and
- C. Outdoor recreation and leisure activities provide substantial economic value to the community and will benefit from conservation efforts; and
- D. Preserving habitats, scenic beauty, and biological diversity contributes to a high quality of life for islanders, wildlife, and visitors; and
- E. Impacts to wildlife and the natural environment from outdoor activities and recreational use can degrade the natural values important to the community; and
- F. Integrating an ethic of stewardship through education and business practices is important to reduce human impacts to the natural environment; and
- G. The *Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics*, a not-for-profit organization, has partnered with San Juan County and other state and federal agencies to provide information and programs supporting stewardship of the San Juan Islands natural environment; and
- H. The seven principles of "*Leave No Trace*" are:
 - 1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
 - 2. Travel and 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 Other Visitors

The member-driven *Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics* teaches people how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. This copyrighted information has been reprinted with permission from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics: www.LNT.org; and

I. San Juan County has established a history of supporting stewardship to bring about natural and economic benefits, as expressed in the adoption of Resolution No. 8-2004 Designating San Juan County as a Voluntary Marine Stewardship Area

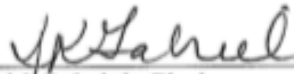
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the County Council hereby designates San Juan County, State of Washington, as a Voluntary Leave No Trace Area to facilitate the protection and preservation of our natural environment for all people, current and future generations;


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Council adopts the "Leave No Trace" guiding principles and ethic to further the intention of this resolution to establish a culture of stewardship in all people residing in and visiting San Juan County.

ADOPTED this 7TH day of OCTOBER 2014.


ATTEST: Clerk of the Council


**COUNTY COUNCIL
SAN JUAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON**


Ingrid Gabriel, Clerk Date 10.7.2014


Rick Hughes, Chair
District 2

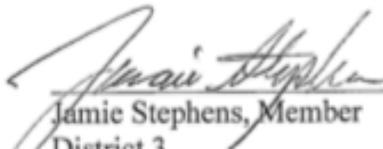
REVIEWED BY COUNTY MANAGER


Michael J. Thomas Date 10/7/14



Bob Jarman, Vice-Chair
District 1

RANDALL K. GAYLORD
APPROVED AS TO FORM ONLY

By: 
Date 10/6/14


Jamie Stephens, Member
District 3

Appendix II

 leave no trace

LEAVE NO TRACE
Geocaching

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Know and comply with the geocaching policies of the land owners or land management agencies where you wish to seek or place caches.
- Prepare for your trip with proper equipment and clothing for the weather, terrain and environmental conditions, and for emergencies.
- Be safe. Let someone know where you will be going and when you expect to return.
- Know how to use your GPS. Carry extra batteries and a map and compass as backup.





TRAVEL AND CACHE ON DURABLE SURFACES

- Travel on designated trails and roads. Comply with posted signs.
- If permitted and you must travel off-trail, choose durable surfaces such as rock, sand, gravel and dry grass, and spread out to avoid creating new paths.
- Use maps to find a route that will minimize impacts. Note waypoints during your journey to assist you on your return trip.
- After you've finished searching for a cache, the area should look as though you were never there.
- Do not place a cache in sensitive locations such as fragile vegetation or soils, critical wildlife habitat, wetlands, lakeshores, alpine areas or caves.
- Do not place a cache in special areas such as designated Wilderness Areas, Wild and Scenic River Corridors or near historic and cultural sites.
- If you notice a path has started to wear in the vicinity of a cache, notify the cache owner to move the cache.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- Cache In Trash Out. Carry an extra trash bag for trash, leftover and dropped food, and litter left by others.
- Use established bathrooms when available. If not available, deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water sources, campsites, trails and caches.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products in a double plastic bag.

In cooperation with:

LEAVE NO TRACE
Geocaching

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Preserve the past; observe, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Never use artifacts as cache items.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects for others to enjoy.
- Practice the "lift, look, replace" technique – if you lift a rock to look under it, replace it exactly as you found it.

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS


- If you plan to have a fire, know the fire regulations and current guidelines for the area you plan to visit.



RESPECT WILDLIFE

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed wild 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.
- Never leave food of any kind in a cache. Wildlife may find and destroy the cache and may be harmed by consuming food wrappers.
- Respect wildlife when traveling to and from cache locations. Avoid locations where there is significant traffic from wildlife, such as water sources.
- Keep pets on a leash for their safety and the safety of wild animals. Consider leaving pets at home.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Take breaks on durable surfaces away from the trail.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.
- Geocaching is one of many outdoor recreational activities. Respect the rights and experience of other visitors.
- When traveling to and from caches, take notice of private property signs and don't trespass.
- The future of geocaching lies in the hands of geocachers. Practice the principles of Leave No Trace.

For more information and materials:
1.800.332.4100 or www.LNT.org 

LEAVE NO TRACE
Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Permits are required year-round in the BWCAW. Know which type you need.
- Group size is limited to 9 people/4 watercraft at any time or anywhere in the BWCAW.
- Know and adhere to regulations, closures and campfire bans.
- Bring maps covering your entire route, which show entry/exit points, portages and campsites.
- Prepare for weather, select and use proper gear and know what to do in an emergency.
- Always leave a trip itinerary with someone before departing.

TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

- Camp only at designated campsites with steel fire grates and latrines.
- Travel on established portages, single file in the middle of the trail.
- Keep campsites small – stay in area where vegetation is absent and don't enlarge campsites.
- All members of a permit group must camp together at one site.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- Disposable metal or glass containers are not allowed.
- Fuel, insect repellent, hygiene items and medicines may be kept in original containers.
- Pack out whatever you pack in, including food, containers, disposable items and live bait.
- Wash dishes and do personal washing 150-200 feet from any water source.
- Clean fish away from campsites, and dispose of remains well away from shorelines, campsites, trails and portages.
- Latrines are not garbage cans. Put only human waste and toilet paper in latrines. Pack out personal items like tampons, condoms, cigarettes, bandages, etc.
- If not near a latrine, dig a cat-hole 6 to 8 inches deep and 150-200 feet from a water source.
- When breaking camp, make sure campsite and fire grate are free of trash. Pack it out.

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Leave archaeological, historical and rock painting sites undisturbed.
- Do not collect items found in nature such as antlers, driftwood, rocks, etc.
- Prevent introduction of non-native species by inspecting and cleaning watercraft, footwear and clothing.
- Do not transport plants or live bait.

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

- Consider alternatives to a fire such as a camp stove.
- Be aware of and abide by current fire restrictions.
- Fires are allowed only within USFS steel fire grates.
- Use only dead and downed wood gathered well away from campsites and lakeshores.
- Keep fires small.
- Burning trash is illegal in Minnesota.
- Drown and stir your campfire until it is cold to the touch. Never leave a campfire unattended.
- It is illegal to cut green or growing vegetation of any kind.

RESPECT WILDLIFE

- Enjoy wildlife at a distance.
- Never feed wildlife.
- Minimize noise for a better chance of experiencing wildlife.
- Avoid sensitive/easily damaged habitat.
- Be aware of sensitive wildlife species and seasonal stresses on wildlife.
- Separate kitchen, food storage and sleeping areas.
- Store food securely, minimize food odors and keep a clean camp.
- Pets must be kept under human control at all times on a 6-foot or shorter leash.
- Pack out or bury pet waste in a cathole.
- Practice catch and release even when you are within the allowable catch.
- State game and fishing laws apply in the BWCAW.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

- Respect the solitude of other visitors and preserve the wilderness experience.
- Follow the nine-person rule by keeping your distance in the water while others are loading or unloading.
- Do not rush or crowd other groups. Take breaks in locations away from portage trails.
- Sound carries long distances over water. Avoid yelling, banging pots, dragging canoes over rocks, singing loudly, etc. especially in the morning, evening and while traveling.

For more information on the BWCAW, call 218.626.4300 or visit www.fs.usda.gov/superior
 For more information on Leave No Trace visit www.LNT.org or call 1.800.332.4100