

Leave No Trace

There are many ways to enjoy the outdoors. Many of the National Park's habitats are particularly fragile. Litter, eroded soils, trampled vegetation, scars from fires, human waste and displaced wildlife are just some of the impacts directly linked to our recreational activities.

Seven Principles of Leave No Trace

01 / PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

Know the regulations and special concerns for the area that you'll visit. The National Park Information office can advise on protected areas and seasonal concerns. Check if your chosen recreation or activity is permitted. Always follow signs. Check the weather forecast. Prepare for changeable weather and the possibility of something going wrong. Ensure you have the skills and equipment needed for your activity. If you are a group leader you have added responsibilities – know the competencies and expectations of your group. For environmental, safety and social reasons split large parties into smaller groups of less than 10 people (ideally between 4-6).

02 / TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

Durable surfaces include established trails, rock, gravel, dry grass and snow. On eroded tracks keep to the centre of the track, even when wet and muddy, to avoid widening the erosion. In pristine areas disperse use to avoid creating new tracks. Avoid areas where impacts are just beginning to show. *For details on camping in the mountains, see [Wild Camping](#).

03 / RESPECT WILDLIFE

Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them. Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviour and exposes them to predators and other dangers. Dogs should be kept under effective control – i.e. they should come at first call. Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young and winter.

04 / LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

Take care not to damage old walls, ruins, abandoned mine shafts and their workings. Leave rocks, plants, animals and other natural objects as you find them. Fallen trees and dead wood are valuable wildlife habitats – please do not remove or damage them. Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species. E.g. wash down all boats to avoid introducing zebra mussel.

05 / BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS

Park carefully – avoid blocking gateways and forest entrances. Remember that park staff and the emergency services may need access at all times. Respect other visitors and the quality of their experience. Take rest breaks away from tracks. Let nature's sounds prevail; avoid loud noises.

06 / DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

Leave no waste – remove all rubbish and leftover food items, even biodegradable items like teabags and fruit peels. To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 30m away from streams or lakes, use small amounts of biodegradable soaps if necessary. Scatter strained wastewater. Human waste should be buried or carried out depending on the soil type. Waterlogged soils impede the proper breakdown of waste. Human waste should be removed in these areas. To dispose of solid human waste, dig a 'cathole' – a hole 10-12cm deep, located at least 30m away from watercourses and 50m from walking routes. Cover and disguise the hole when finished. All toilet paper and hygiene products should be carried out.

07 / MINIMISE THE EFFECTS OF FIRE

Fire can be devastating to habitats and wildlife. Campfires are not currently permitted in the National Park; the issuing of permits for campfires is suspended pending review. Only gas barbecues are permitted within the National Park.

For more information, see www.leavenotraceireland.org

Call our Education Centre on 0761 002691 if you or your group would like to discuss Leave No Trace opportunities in Glenveagh or any of our nature reserves in Donegal.