

Discuss Leave No Trace Principles with Your Party



The most effective Leave No Trace principles are those that are discussed and agreed upon before starting a trip and then reaffirmed throughout the expedition.

- Discuss all of the Leave No Trace principles with your party/clients before setting out.
- Talk about the social barriers to practicing outdoor ethics and how to overcome them.
- Discuss the social and biophysical benefits of following Leave No Trace principles.
- This ensures the appropriate mindset goes out into the field.
- It is much harder to try to educate your party/clients about Leave No Trace for the first time in the wind, rain and bugs after a long day.

Discuss people's experience, skill-levels, physical condition, comfort-levels and expectations when you are planning your expedition.

- Significant impacts and emergencies occur when people get into situations beyond their familiarity and abilities.
- Explicitly discussing expectations and comfort-levels helps alleviate potential stressful situations.



Discuss the appropriate gear for recreating responsibly.

- Choose gear that is appropriate for the conditions you will encounter.
- Review the seven Leave No Trace principles and discuss what practices and gear allow you to apply the strongest outdoor ethic.

Every Leave No Trace principle could begin with “Respect”

- Leave No Trace means thinking beyond your group and your trip and conducting yourselves respectful of the natural community and of future visitors.
- Dedicate the time and effort to learn about the natural world you will visit during your trip.
- Consider your impact on an area in the context of past, present and future visitor impacts.

Outdoor ethics do not spontaneously emerge nor remain static. They must be regularly discussed, understood, examined and adapted.

- Recognize that once in the field, your practices must continually adapt to the areas you are visiting.
- Examine impacts you make, re-naturalize the area if possible and discuss how to avoid making those impacts in the future.
- Regularly ask yourselves: How can we best blend with this area?
- After your trip, debrief: what worked well, what did not and what would you do differently next time?



Teach Leave No Trace principles to others, especially youth, to spread responsible recreation practices.

- As responsible citizens we must collectively improve our relationship to our public lands in order to preserve their natural integrity.
- Teaching youth to respect the land and to recreate responsibly ensures a healthy lifelong relationship with the outdoors.
- Consider becoming an [LNT Trainer](http://www.lnt.org/training/index.html) or [LNT Master](http://www.lnt.org/training/index.html). (Link: <http://www.lnt.org/training/index.html>)
- Acquire [Tread Lightly!](http://www.treadlightly.org/page.php/programs-treadtrainer/treadtrainer.html) training if you recreate in a motorized or a mechanized fashion. (Link: <http://www.treadlightly.org/page.php/programs-treadtrainer/treadtrainer.html>)



1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

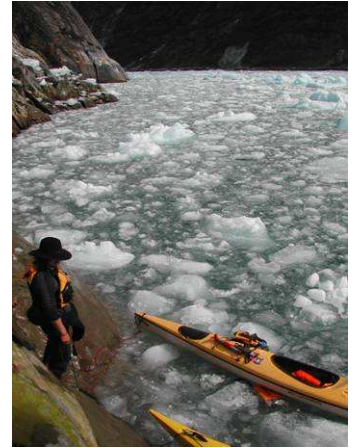


Extreme conditions exist in the Alaskan coastal rainforests, mountains and surrounding waters year round.

- Cold water and inclement weather make hypothermia a constant risk.
- Weather conditions may change rapidly including precipitation, temperature, winds and visibility.
- Sea conditions may change rapidly including wave height, tidal exchanges, currents and ice floes.
- Terrestrial challenges include severe terrain, dense vegetation, glacial crevasses, loose/uneven/slippery footing and swift cold rivers.
- Coastal challenges include tidewater glaciers, icebergs, strong currents, reefs, rocks, mudflats and limited sheltered anchorages/landings.
- Winter challenges include avalanches, thin ice over water, white-outs, deep snow, temperatures well below freezing, high winds, big seas and minimal daylight.

Coastal Alaska is vast, wild and remote. Proper planning is essential for your comfort and safety.

- Your party and your gear must be capable of handling cold, soaking conditions.
- Your party must be self-sufficient in case of being weathered-in or in case of an emergency.
- Communications coverage for satellite phones, cell phones and marine radios can be non-existent or spotty.
- Proper planning includes the flexibility to adjust plans for the conditions and recognizing “no-go” situations.
- Experienced rangers usually adjust their plans several times over a one-week field trip!



Before setting out, all visitors should talk with local USFS staff to learn of regulations/ special concerns that address protecting the resource, wildlife, visitors and the visitor experience.

- Outfitters/Guides and their staff must know the parameters of their permits including: where they are permitted to operate; when/for how many user-days, and any requirements from added stipulations.

Many Alaskan campsites can only sustain small groups due to topography and vegetation constraints. Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use. Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into smaller groups.

- Prior to the season outfitters/guides should coordinate with other outfitters/guides to minimize overlapping use and to determine how overlapping groups will conduct themselves and/or resolve their issues.
- Visitors are encouraged to avoid popular areas during peak use, especially areas with limited camping, such as glacial fjords or small islands.
- Large groups disturb wildlife, compact soil, trample vegetation, create trails and impact other visitors' experiences.
- Small groups are lighter on the land, plants, animals and other visitors.



Repackage food to minimize trash. Bring extra food.

- Eliminate trash before your trip: pack food in reusable containers or plastic bags and get rid of packaging and wrappers.
- Prepare snack bags so you can eat throughout the day to sustain a constant energy level and to help stave off hypothermia.
- Plan for extra meals in case you are weathered-in, your trip takes longer than expected or you encounter an emergency.

Eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns and flagging which diminish the wild character of Alaska. Use a map and compass or a GPS unit to navigate accurately without disturbing the land or degrading future visitors' experiences.

- Make sure everyone in your party has the skills to navigate with a map and compass and GPS.
- Note Alaska has significant magnetic declination.
- Inclement weather, dense vegetation and winter darkness make it necessary to learn how to navigate with poor visibility.



Leave a wilderness trip plan with two responsible people. Know what to do if you or your party is lost or weathered-in.

- Your trip plan should include who is in your party, where you are going, when, with what gear, when you expect to return and when the Alaska State Troopers should be called if you are overdue.
- Two good examples of wilderness trip plans are:
 - The [Alaska State Troopers Wilderness Trip Plan](#)

(Link: <http://www.dps.state.ak.us/pio/images/AST%20Trip%20Plan.pdf>)

- The [Wrangell - St. Elias National Park & Preserve Backcountry Trip Plan](#)

(Link: <http://www.nps.gov/wrst/planyourvisit/upload/Backcountry%20Itinerary%20Form.pdf>).

- Ensure everyone in your party knows what to do if your party gets lost, someone gets separated from the group or you are weathered-in.



2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces



The Alaskan ecosystem contains vegetation that is sensitive to trampling. We must keep in mind that we are not only visitors in the wildlands, but also stewards.

- Damage to soils and vegetation occurs quickly and can be severe and long term.
- By concentrating use on durable surfaces – those surfaces minimally affected by human use -- we can enjoy an area and leave it as we found it.
- Examples of durable surfaces are: established trails and campsites; bare rock; beaches; gravel bars; dry grasses, unvegetated forest duff and snow.

We can serve as better stewards of coastal Alaska by learning which surfaces are durable and which plants are vulnerable.

- When planning your trip, inquire with local USFS staff to determine the best durable surfaces and to learn which plant communities are most sensitive to trampling and which can endure or quickly recover from use.
- Beaches are the most widespread durable surface along coastal Alaska: they require an awareness of tidal ranges and navigational hazards to be safely used.

- Game trails provide durable traveling surfaces, but should not be used when there are recent salmon kills, carcasses or other fresh signs that indicate animals might be surprised or disturbed.
- Camps should be as far from game trails as possible.

Upon arrival at a new site, take time to explicitly discuss the camp layout that will best preserve the natural integrity of the area.

- Before establishing camp, discuss the appropriate places for unloading gear and setting up tents, the kitchen, the food cache and the latrine, and what routes will be used to transit between these areas.
- Recognize that the kitchen area generally receives the greatest amount of use.

In general, it is best to protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams. In Alaska, it may be acceptable to travel/camp along some river/lake corridors to take advantage of the durable surfaces of beach sand and gravel bars.

- Waterways count as durable surfaces for travel.
- In areas where salmon are running, care must be exercised not to displace the 22 species of forest-dwelling birds and mammals that feed directly on the carcasses of spawned-out salmon, and not to disturb the salmon redds (egg beds).
- Beaches along river/lake corridors are often popular spots and might be more crowded and impacted.
- Rivers may rise and fall rapidly from rain swell, snow and glacier melt, flash floods and glacial outburst floods.
- Discuss with local USFS staff the above concerns to plan your trip.



Many of the significant impacts we find are from people carving out their own Alaskan campsites: limbing trees, clearing rocks/vegetation, leveling the ground, building benches and constructing large fire rings.

- Remember: good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
- Use camp stoves, sleeping pads, camp chairs and head lamps to provide comfort without site modification.
- Make sure your campsite is clean and natural looking when you leave.

In popular areas durable surfaces include trails, established campsites and other developed sites.

- Prior to setting out, ensure that your party has the proper footwear – rubber boots, gaiters, hip-waders – and the proper appreciation of staying on existing trails, even through deep mud and water.
- Using established routes, trails and campsites is always preferable to pioneering new ones.
- Keep campsites small.
- Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
- Walk single file in the middle of trails to avoid widening them.



Even in pristine areas where visitor use has remained relatively stable, campsites are sprouting up in traditionally low-use areas. In these remote areas, it becomes yet more essential to seek out durable surfaces.

- Visit remote or pristine areas only if you are committed to practicing Leave No Trace principles and discuss them in detail with your party.
- Avoid places where impacts are just beginning so they may recover and remain wild.
- Spread out when hiking over vegetation: when no single plant receives multiple footfalls a trail is less likely to form.
- Walking single file is acceptable where there is little chance of trampling plants, such as along a game trail or gravel bar.
- Beaches, gravel bars, unvegetated forest duff and snow are common durable surfaces in remote Alaska.
- Vary routes around camp to avoid forming trails. Use a collapsible container to bring water to camp rather than making multiple trips to the water source.
- Move camp each day to avoid prolonged impact to any site.
- Dedicate time to naturalize your campsite when you leave so others do not use the same area and it can recover.



3. Dispose of Waste Properly



Nothing disappoints us more than arriving to wild Alaska and finding trash and human waste. Alaska offers a place of discovery and exploration, where we can experience pristine natural settings and wild animals. Disposing of trash/waste properly is crucial to keeping Alaska wild.

- Discuss with your party ahead of time how trash will be secured/packed out and how human waste and toilet paper will be managed.
- Minimize the amount of trash you generate in the backcountry by repackaging food beforehand.
- Bear-proof canisters stashed away from the tent site represent the most-secure means of storing food and trash.
- Food and trash may also be hung 12 feet off the ground, 9 feet away from the tree, and several feet below the hanging limb.
- Some sites may have developments facilitating secure food/trash storage.
- Inquire with local USFS staff to learn the best means for securing food/trash and for disposing of human waste.

Ensure everyone understands what qualifies as trash and how it must be secured.

- “Pack it in, pack it out” is the simple mantra to follow.
- Biodegradable trash, such as orange peels, apple cores, coffee grounds and onion skins, must be packed out.
- Trash must be secured with food to prevent conditioning of bears, rodents, birds and other animals.
- Separating trash into dry and wet containments allows dry trash to be compressed tightly and wet trash to be doubly- or triply-secured.

As users of our public lands, it is our responsibility to keep our treasured places clean and natural.

- Pack out any trash you find, teach others to do the same and we can re-wild areas that have been historically trashed.
- The vast shorelines of coastal Alaska receive all kinds of flotsam: consider making beachcombing and trash collecting/re-wilding a part of your trip.
- If you are unable to pack out trash you find, note down or GPS its location and inform local USFS staff of its presence.



Report Marine Debris in order that it may get cleaned up.

- Record the date, time, common name of location, latitude, longitude, type of debris and size of debris field.
- Take photos if possible.
- Send debris info to marinedebris@ak.net or submit information at www.MCAFoundation.org.

There are several options for disposing human waste in Alaska. Contact your local Forest Service staff or permit administrator to find out which methods you should follow. Proper disposal of human waste:

- avoids polluting fresh water sources;
- eliminates contact with insects and animals,;
- maximizes decomposition, and
- minimizes the chances for social impacts.

Whenever possible use bathrooms, outhouses and other developed sites for human waste disposal.

Disposing of Human Waste: Pack it out.

Several different methods are now commercially available for packing out human waste. Some methods render the waste inert such that it may be disposed of with regular trash after the trip. Some set-ups include a comfortable toilet seat and a small shelter.

This method represents the strongest outdoor ethic and will be increasingly required as more visitors seek to enjoy their national forests.



Disposing of Human Waste: Pack it out [continued]

Advantages:

- Most eco-friendly means of waste disposal.
- Toilet can be located wherever is most appropriate.
- Toilet seat and shelter help remove the stigma of pooping in the woods by re-creating modern comfort.
- Shelter provides privacy in exposed areas.
- Shelter helps keep clients from getting eaten by bugs and being exposed to the elements while conducting their business.
- Helps areas that receive high-levels of use retain their naturalness.
- Preserves pristine areas.

Disadvantages:

- Incurs some cost.
- Requires logistical considerations.

Required or recommended:

- Whenever possible.
- For larger groups.
- For icefield trips and glacier travel.
- For muskegs.
- In riparian areas / river corridors.



Disposing of Human Waste: Marine disposal.

Along the remote Alaskan coast, human waste may be disposed of in the ocean. It must be done where there is significant wave action and/or currents. It should never be done in eddies, backwaters or where people land/launch, cook, clean or camp. It is best done by relieving yourself directly into the water.

Advantages:

- Prevents areas with bare rock or thin soil from becoming contaminated.
- Prevents areas with limited land disposal from becoming contaminated.
- Easy to wash hands.

Disadvantages:

- Privacy can be hard to come by on open beaches or along busy waterways.
- Can be slippery/hazardous/wet accessing areas exposed to currents and waves.
- Some people object to contaminating the sea and may insist on land disposal.

Required or recommended:

- Only when packing it out is not practiced.
- In glacial fjords with a non-existent or thin soil base.
- On small islands with limited land disposal options.
- Along remote shorelines.

Disposing of Human Waste: Cathole method.

If no facilities are available and packing out your waste is impractical, deposit human fecal material in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from running water, camp, trails, and drainages. Try to get as high and dry as possible and as far from camp as possible to avoid high concentrations around the campsite. Naturalize the hole site afterward.

Advantages:

- Method most people are familiar with.

Disadvantages:

- In Alaska, microbes are slow to break down feces in the soil.
- Can be difficult to dig 6 to 8 inches down in rocky or frozen ground.
- Concentrations of buried feces can occur in commonly used areas.

Required or recommended:

- Only when packing it out and marine disposal are not practiced.
- In the alpine.

Toilet paper left in the wild is an animal attractant (even if buried), clumps up when wet and remains for months and degrades the visitor experience.

- Toilet paper must be packed out, or a natural alternative must be used.
- Natural options for toilet paper include snow, smooth stones or sticks, leaves and moss.
- Natural TP options should be disposed of the same as the human waste.
- Feminine hygiene products and diapers must also be packed out.

Additional guidelines regarding human (and dog) waste:

- The practice of “shot-putting” – relieving yourself on a flat rock and then hurling it into the sea – is discouraged since it will strip an area of flat rocks.
- Dog feces should be disposed of in the same manner as human waste with the exception that they can be tossed in a trash receptacle without treatment.
- Waterless hand sanitizer offers a good method for cleaning hands after going to the bathroom.

Urine

- Urine can attract animals seeking salt: avoid urinating on plants.
- Urinate away from camps and trails on rock, bare ground, in the ocean or below the high tide line.
- Along big rivers it may be acceptable to urinate directly into the water or wet sand, although eddies and still waters must be avoided.

With dishwater, the goal is to keep food smells away from your camp in order to avoid luring animals, especially bears, into your kitchen.

- Food particles must be strained out and secured the same as trash.
- Ziploc bags with holes, bandanas, cheese cloth, coffee filters and regular strainers all work to strain food particles.
- Be sure to wash your strainer well and secure it with your food and trash.
- When camping along the ocean or big rivers, wash dishes away from the kitchen and camp and after straining the water, dispose of it in moving water at least 200 feet from backwater eddies.
- When camping away from the ocean or big rivers, wash your dishes and strain your dishwater at least 200 feet from camp, the kitchen and any fresh water, and then broadcast (scatter) the gray water over a wide area, avoiding vegetation if possible.

Soaps and lotions

- Biodegradable soap should be used sparingly or not at all: it is not natural; it is chemical.
- Biodegradable soap requires soil to break down properly; it does not biodegrade in rivers or lakes and can lead to algae blooms.
- Eliminate or minimize lotions contacting water for similar reasons.
- A washcloth, water and friction can clean any human.
- Hot water, a scrubbing pad or sand/gravel can clean any dishes.
- Alcohol-based waterless hand sanitizers kill germs without contaminating the environment.

If you feel you must use soap:

- Use only biodegradable and phosphate-free soap in minimal amounts.
- Do all washing, bathing, or cleaning at least 200 feet from any water sources.
- Dispose of soapy wash and rinse water in a cathole 6 inches deep to allow bacteria in the soil to completely biodegrade the soap.

Game and fish entrails

- Dispose of game and fish entrails in swift river currents or in the ocean where there are waves and currents.
- Contact local USFS staff for the best means of disposing entrails away from rivers and the sea: they can serve as a strong bear attractant.



Photo taken by NOAA Fisheries under permit #932-1489-09

4. Leave What You Find



Leave What You Find means retaining the original character of the Alaskan wildlands such that natural ecosystems and traditional human sites remain intact and we pass on the gift of discovery to those who follow.

- Before your trip discuss how you are both visitors and stewards for the present and future.
- Throughout your trip emphasize the value of leaving natural and cultural objects undisturbed.
- In many areas collecting natural and archaeological or historic objects is prohibited or regulated: know the pertinent laws and regulations for the areas you will visit.

- [The Archaeological Resources Protection Act](http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/tribalrelations/Policy/ARPA_PL96-95.pdf) and other federal laws make it illegal to damage, destroy, deface, or remove archaeological and historic resources from public lands. (Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/tribalrelations/Policy/ARPA_PL96-95.pdf)

Images in stone and wood created by Native artisans entwine tradition, belief and location. The essences of the images are inseparably joined to their location in the cultural landscape.

- Artifacts and structures that may be found along the Alaskan coast include rock art, stone tools, ancient fish traps, culturally modified trees, shell middens, grave sites, totem poles, cabin remains, village sites, and industrial remains including mines, canneries and fur farms.
- Preserve Alaska's past: appreciate, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave them as you find them.
- Gain a sense of discovery by learning the local human history and understanding how people and nature have inter-related where you now visit.



Less than 1% of the Tongass and Chugach National Forests have been inventoried for the presence of archeological resources.

- If you find artifacts during your expedition, please note/GPS their location, photograph them and share your discovery with your local USFS archeologists.
- Assist archeologists by volunteering for a [Passport in Time](http://www.passportintime.com/) project. (Link: <http://www.passportintime.com/>)

Legislation designating public lands in Alaska recognizes and allows the continuation of traditional uses.

- Respect private inholdings, permitted cabins and traditional/subsistence camps you encounter in the wild.
- If you believe a trespass cabin has been built on public lands, inquire with local USFS staff.



Specifically address souvenir-gathering before and during your trip, recognizing that many people value possessions more than undisturbed nature.

- Teach your clients and party to load their cameras, not their packs; to fill their journals, not their pockets.
- Explain to collectors and children the role that natural objects fill in the ecosystem, such as how antlers nourish red-backed voles and how beach stones shelter amphipods (beach hoppers).



Modern portable equipment lets us visit a site comfortably without modifying it. This allows the site to retain its natural integrity and appeal.

- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.
- Do not cut down trees, break branches or clear vegetation.
- If you choose to move a few small sticks and stones for your tent site, replace them before you leave.



Non-native species that alter natural ecosystems are rapidly being introduced to and proliferating in Alaska, especially along popular roads, trails and waterways.

- Water, mud and soil may contain harmful seeds, spores, tiny plants and animals.
- Empty and clean your packs, tents, boats, fishing equipment, vehicles after every trip.
- Before setting out on your trip, clean the dirt from your boots and tire treads.
- Make sure the coat of your pet is free from seeds, twigs and ticks.

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts



Natural occurring fires are uncommon in the temperate rainforest of coastal Alaska. The wet conditions and soggy wood make having campfires difficult.

- Discuss whether or not to have campfires and how to have them prior to your trip.
- Be realistic about the wind, weather, location, and wood availability when deciding if it is safe and responsible to have a fire.
- Never rely on fire for light, warmth or cooking.
- Recognize that fires impact other visitors' experiences and disturb wildlife.

Fires are unethical in places without abundant dead and downed wood and without proper measures to keep them from spreading through organic soil/peat moss/root systems.

- Ask local USFS staff about pertinent regulations and campfire management techniques.
- Be mindful that campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry by encouraging additional use in pristine areas.



Foregoing fire and using a camp stove represents the lightest hand on the land.

- Using a stove is often the most efficient way to prepare food and warm drinks and consequently offers your party more leisure time.
- Forsaking fire gives your party a greater opportunity to see wildlife, stars and the northern lights.
- By not having a fire and a smoke plume, you minimize your impact on other visitors.



If you choose to have a fire, use an existing grate or fire ring.

- Concentrating use prevents the spread of fire scars and vegetation trampling.
- Remove any trash in a grate or ring before using it.
- Reduce fire rings that are greater than 24 inches in diameter to discourage large fires that consume lots of wood.

If there are no existing grates or fire rings, build a low-impact fire.

- Low-impact fires are generally 18-24 inches in diameter or less.
- Only have fires in areas without organic soil, such as in the sand or gravel of a beach or bar.
- A fire pan or fire blanket (both commercially available) can be used. Place a few inches of inorganic soil on the pan or blanket and then set it atop a bed of stones on a durable, unvegetated surface.
- If there is a source of inorganic soil, you can build a mound 6-8 inches deep and 18-24 inches wide. By doing this on top of a ground cloth, and by rolling the ground cloth up



under the edge of the mound to protect it from embers, it is easy to return the soil to its source once the fire is out.

Firewood must be dead, down, abundant and collected from a widespread area.

In recently de-glaciated areas and at tree-line in the alpine, trees and woody debris are pioneers representing the rise of a forest for the first time in hundreds or thousands of years. In other areas, cedar, spruce, hemlock and shore pine may be centuries old and should remain part of our ancient natural heritage.

- Never fell a standing snag nor strip dead branches off a standing tree. Certain species of birds rely on dead snags and branches for their perching.
- Areas that accumulate driftwood represent the best natural sources of firewood.
- Milled wood (dimensional lumber) that has washed up on coastal beaches and that is not chemically treated is perfect for fires.
- Otherwise only use wood you can break by hand, roughly the size of an adult's wrist or smaller.
- Do not break up wood until you are just about to burn it so unused wood retains its natural appearance.
- Consider packing in firewood if you are going to an area where firewood is not likely to be abundant or where wood has been preserved for scores of years.

Manage your campfire and restore the fire site to its natural appearance once the fire is out cold.

- Never leave a fire unattended.
- Never build a fire at the base of a rock where smoke will blacken the face.
- Never build a fire at the base of a tree where it may burn the roots and blacken the tree.
- Burn firewood completely to ash including the ends.
- Never burn foil, foil-lined packets, plastic, aluminum, metal, glass or food.
- Saturate the ash with water and mix until the entire fire is cold to the touch.
- Spread ashes widely; do not leave them in one place.
- Restore the fire site to its natural appearance.



6. Respect Wildlife



In the rest of our country, wildlife occurs in pockets of habitat surrounded by civilization. In Coastal Alaska wildlife habitat surrounds pockets of civilization. As use of our public land grows and the pressure of civilization increases, it is incumbent upon us not to stress wildlife but to honor its wildness.

- Learn the behavior of wildlife you regularly observe and recognize signs of disturbance.
- Read [responsible marine wildlife viewing](http://seagrant.uaf.edu/bookstore/seasandcoasts/issues/ak-seas-and-coasts-0306.pdf) to learn ethical viewing practices for marine mammals, sea birds and other common Alaskan coastal creatures. (Link: <http://seagrant.uaf.edu/bookstore/seasandcoasts/issues/ak-seas-and-coasts-0306.pdf>)
- Contact local USFS staff to learn about local wildlife concerns, such as food-conditioned animals, sensitive times and areas, and hunting seasons.

Outfitters/Guides and group leaders should discuss ethical wildlife viewing with their clients/group before the trip in order to foster wonderment and to avoid frustration during wildlife encounters.

- Strive to conduct yourselves such that animals do not register your presence or alter their behavior.
- Educate clients and companions to observe/photograph animals in the context of their environment and not to seek the closest possible approach.
- Move slowly and quietly in proximity to wildlife unless you need to make your presence known in bear country.
- Learn the status of different species to educate clients/companions and build respect for the animals' well-being.
- Invest in telephoto lenses, high-powered binoculars or spotting scopes to allow clients/companions to experience wildlife without disturbance.
- When traveling through areas with wildlife, especially via motorized transport such as snowmobiles or zodiac rafts, travel in a close group instead of spreading out.
- Appreciate the greater context in which animals may be pressured by groups beyond your own, day after day.



The near endless capacity of the digital camera allows people to take shot after shot while closing in on wildlife for the best possible photo.

- Think beyond yourself when photographing wildlife and consciously strive not to disturb animals.
- Do not let clients/companions/other outfitters/guides pressure you into forsaking your ethics in order to press animals.
- Understand that when an animal changes behavior as a result of our presence, we are too close.
- Never shout or make noise to get an animal's attention for a photo.
- Educate others who put their photos above the animal's well-being.
- Invest in a telephoto to avoid disturbing animals.

The relationship of children to the natural world is influenced by adult behavior.

- Teach children not to approach, feed, yell at or harass wild animals.
- Share in wonderment and respect for all creatures great and small.
- Be mindful that some species' future survival will depend on the ethics and appreciation learned by today's children.

Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

- Sensitive times and places include those of nesting, denning, mating, nursing, wintering, molting and feeding.
- Avoid streams when salmon are running to keep from encountering bears or displacing other animals that feed on the fish.
- Recognize that many birds nest on the ground in the alpine, near glaciers, along the shore and in flood plains – retreat if local birds show signs of distress.
- Observe harbor seal and Stellar sea lion haul outs from afar rather than up-close.

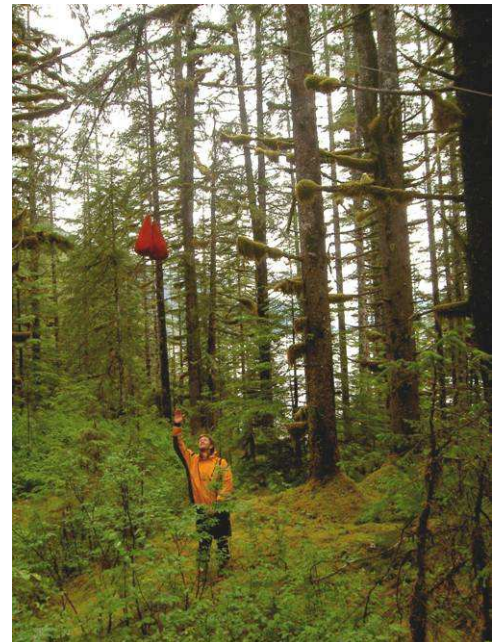


Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.

- Never feed animals.
- Recognize that all kinds of animals can become food-conditioned, such as jays, rodents, ravens, deer, coyotes and bear.

Ensure that everyone in your party knows the proper outdoor ethics for recreating in bear country.

- Inquire with local USFS Staff as to the best means for securing food, trash and other attractants during your trip.
- Ensure that everyone in your group recognizes what needs to be secured from bears (food, food scraps, trash, toiletries, feminine hygiene products, bug repellent, cook kits, etc...)
- Establish kitchen areas 100 yards or more from your tent sites.
- Keep clean camps and be extra meticulous in picking up food scraps and straining gray water.
- Never take attractants into your tents!
- Have a plan for what you will do in case of a bear encounter in camp and in transit.
- Lack of visibility/surprise is a consistent key factor in bear attacks.



Extend respect and non-disturbance to all animals, not just mega-charismatic ones.

- Sea birds, including [species in decline](#), are often disturbed by kayakers, boaters and hikers. (Link: <http://ak.audubon.org/pdfs/WatchList2005.pdf>)
- Use brigade lines to pass gear up and down the beach to avoid multiple trips trampling intertidal life.
- See [responsible marine wildlife viewing](#) for guidelines on responsible tidepooling. (Link: <http://seagrant.uaf.edu/bookstore/seasandcoasts/issues/ak-seas-and-coasts-0306.pdf>)



**Dogs disturb wildlife and impact the experience of other visitors, even on-leash.
Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.**

- The scent, sound, urine, feces and overall presence of dogs affect other animals, whether or not you register the impacts.
- Dogs are often more protective of their owners in unfamiliar areas and may react more aggressively toward other visitors.
- Dog feces displace some animals, attract others and degrade other visitor's experience – clean up after your pet.

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors and Users



For some people, a trip to wild Alaska is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that requires significant time, money and effort to realize. For others, wild Alaska is their local backyard. However we recreate, we all appreciate our public lands. By conducting ourselves in a manner that respects other visitors and types of use, we preserve the quality of the Alaskan experience for everyone.

- Inquire with local USFS staff as to what kinds of use are common, where and when, in order to keep your trip expectations realistic.
- Respect regulations designed to protect visitor experiences.
- Avoid popular times and areas to minimize visitor conflicts.
- Travel in smaller groups to maintain flexibility and to minimize your impact to others in the wild.
- Commercial operators should coordinate with other operators to avoid schedule and location conflicts and to determine how to resolve overlapping use.

Be courteous.

- Maintaining a cooperative spirit in the backcountry allows us to bond over our common appreciation for our public wildlands.
- Recognize that our attitudes toward one another color our experiences when we meet in the backcountry.
- Keep in mind that in times of need, it will often be your backcountry neighbor who will be there to offer you assistance.

Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.

- Choose clothes and gear that are natural-toned and blend in with the background.
- Be mindful not to crowd others when deciding where to camp.
- Consider your visual impact as well as the best durable surface when choosing where to camp.
- Discuss with other user-groups where they intend to camp when you are transiting the same area at the same time to avoid crowding each other.



Respect subsistence users.

- Hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering remain a vital part of Alaskans' subsistence way of life.
- Subsistence activities occur throughout the year on Alaska's public lands.
- Do not disturb equipment, caches, structures and activities.

Respect Native and private lands and cabins.

- Recognize that there are 44 million acres of Alaskan native lands and innumerable private inholdings and permitted cabins interspersed with the public lands in Alaska.
- Obtain permission to transit native/private land, follow regulations and pay applicable fees.



Let nature's sounds prevail.

- Only yell if it is absolutely necessary.
- Don't shout or blow horns to generate echoes.
- Be mindful of how well sound carries over water.
- Turn off your cell phone or leave it at home.
- Listen to music through headphones or save it for when you are back in town.
- Teach children not to yell but to respect the sounds of nature and to identify various animal calls.

