

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces



Beach sand makes a great durable surface.

Overview for the Chugach and Tongass National Forests:

When planning your trip, inquire with local USFS staff to determine the best durable surfaces and the most sensitive/resilient plants.

Concentrate use on durable surfaces, such as established trails and campsites, bare rock, beaches, gravel bars, dry grasses, unvegetated forest duff and snow.

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

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.

Common impacts occur when people limb trees, clear rocks/vegetation, level the ground, build benches and construct large fire rings.

Use camp stoves, sleeping pads, camp chairs and head lamps to provide comfort without site modification, and naturalize your site when you leave.

In popular areas keep campsites small, focus activity where vegetation is absent and walk single file in the middle of trails – even muddy ones -- to avoid widening them.

Visit remote or pristine areas only if you are committed to practicing Leave No Trace principles; avoid places where impacts are beginning and when breaking camp dedicate time to naturalize your campsite so others do not use the same area.