

Guide to Primitive Camping on the Hiawatha National Forest

Camping is permitted on National Forest lands outside of campgrounds and permitted (dispersed) campsites. The following restrictions apply:

- Your stay is limited to 16 days. After this period, your camping equipment and all persons must move to another site at least one mile away, for an additional stay, not to exceed 16 days.
- On those lakes with dispersed (permitted) campsites on them, you may not set up your campsite within 400 feet of the shoreline anywhere on the lake.
- On those lakes without dispersed campsites on them, or on other bodies of water (streams and rivers), your site cannot be established within 50 feet of the water. You cannot camp at boat launch sites.
- Do not block any roads or restrict access to National Forest lands by others.

While enjoying undesignated camping on the Hiawatha National Forest, we ask that you also follow the following "Leave No Trace" principles, so that these public lands will remain clean and attractive for others to enjoy.

Choosing a Campsite

Group size can have an unhealthy impact on the land. Plan on traveling and camping in small groups. No more than seven is ideal. Place tents in cleared tent spaces if one is provided. If a space has not been provided find a small opening at least 200 feet from water and trails, where understory vegetation or timber will not need to be cut or removed. Tents situated on well drained locations do not require trenches to divert surface water. Trenching leads to soil erosion and detracts from the beauty of the area.

Campfires

With the exception of the Grand Island National Recreation Area and the Big Island Lake Wilderness, you can have a campfire anywhere in the forest (as long as there are no emergency fire prohibitions). Dig down to mineral soil before you start your fire. Make sure the fire is completely out before you leave it, and replace the sod and topsoil that you removed. Remember, you will be held responsible for any damages caused by an escaped fire.

Disposing of human waste

Many campers have self-contained toilets. Please empty your holding tanks at sanitation stations. If you will be digging a privy, select a screened site that is a minimum of 50 feet from any water source. The size of the hole will depend on how large your group is and how long you to plan to stay, but you generally want the hole to be no deeper than 6 to 8 inches (the top 6-8 inches of soil works naturally to decompose organic materials). After you're done using the hole, fill it with the soil you removed and then place the sod/topsoil on top. Tamp it down.

Garbage and camp trash

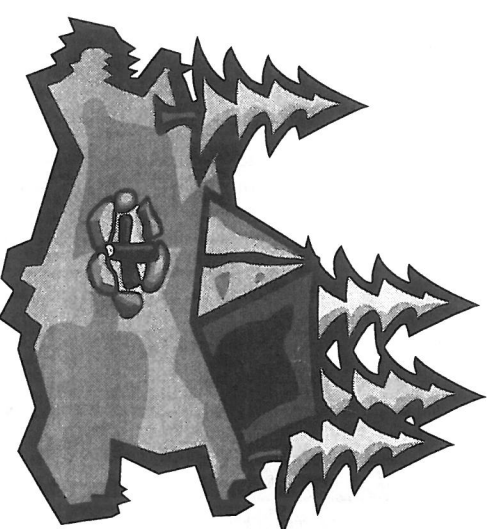
Cans, bottles and aluminum foil don't burn, so please pack these items out when you leave and burn or remove all other trash. Also, burn or carry out all garbage, fish entrails, or other materials so that bears and other animals are not attracted to the area. And please clean up your campsite completely before you leave!

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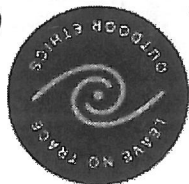


Hiawatha
National
Forest

GUIDE TO PRIMITIVE CAMPING



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LEAVE NO TRACE

<p>Why Leave No Trace?</p> <p>Minimizing your impacts on the land, water, and wildlife is vital in maintaining the beauty and wonder of our public lands. As use in these areas increases Leave No Trace becomes even more important in protecting the quality of the environment and each user's experience.</p> <p>You came here because it's nice, help keep it that way for others.</p>	<p>PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit. Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies. Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use. Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6. Repackaging food to minimize waste. Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of rock cairns, flagging, or marking paint.
<p>TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow. Camp at least 200 feet from lakes and streams. Good campsites are found not made. Altering a site is not necessary. Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites. Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet and muddy. Keep campsites small. Avoid places where impacts are just beginning. 	<p>DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pack it in pack it out. Pick up trash, left over food, and other litter. Deposit solid human waste in catholes, 6 to 8 inches deep, at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise when finished. Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products. To wash yourself or dishes, carry water at least 200 feet away from lakes and streams and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.
<p>LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine, but do not touch cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave rocks, plants, and other natural objects as you find them. Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches. 	<p>MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campfires can cause lasting impacts on the land. Use a lightweight stove for cooking. Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires. Keep fires small. Use only sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand. Burn all wood to ashes, put out completely, then scatter cool ashes.
<p>RESPECT WILDLIFE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe wildlife from a distance, do not follow or approach them. Never feed wild animals. Feeding them can alter their health, natural behaviors, and exposes them to other dangers and predators. Protect wildlife and your food by storing food and trash properly. Control pets at all times, or leave them at home. Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter. 	<p>BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience. Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail. Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock. Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors. Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.