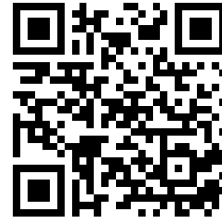




Leave No Trace!

Sequoia National Forest



Leave No Trace! Guidelines help protect the land and lessen the sights and sounds of your visit. Practicing a Leave No Trace! Ethic is very simple; make it hard for others to see or hear you and Leave No Trace! of your visit.

PLANNING

Lots of planning must go into a backcountry trip if it is to be safe and fun. Gathering information from Forest Service offices can help. They can provide current maps, first-hand information on trails and campsites, and anything else pertinent to the anticipated trip.

Consider the group size, when and where to go, equipment, and food selection when planning a trip.



GROUP SIZE

- Small groups are ideal in open areas (deserts, meadows, and above timberline.)
- Consider traveling and camping with fewer than 8-10 people, divided into hiking groups of 2-4 during the day.
- It also is easier to plan for small groups and to keep them together.
- Campsites for smaller groups are easier to find and they harmonize better with the environment.
- Group sizes are limited to no more than 15 people and 25 head of stock in wilderness areas.

WHEN AND WHERE TO GO

To find maximum solitude, avoid backcountry trips on holidays and even some weekends. Since many popular trails and wildernesses always seem to be crowded, visit less popular areas. Plan such trips for the spring or fall, or even the winter.

BE PREPARED

- Obtain a good map, plan your route, and leave your itinerary with someone at home, in case someone has to search for you.
- Know what weather conditions to expect in that area at that time of year and come prepared for the extreme temperature, wind, snow, and rain you might be exposed to.
- A day hike requires minimal survival gear; extra food, a signal mirror, whistle, and warm clothing.
- A highly visible vest ("fluorescent" orange red) should be included in your pack for rescue in the event you should become lost.

TIPS TO REMEMBER!

- Plan for small groups.
- Obtain information about the trip ahead of time and plan your route.
- Visit a less popular area.
- Plan an off-season trip if you wish to avoid crowds.
- Select earth-tone colors (clothing and tents) to blend with the environment.
- Repackage food.
- Check on local rules and regulations.
- Filter or boil drinking water.



Practice a Leave No Trace! Ethic.

When you leave your campsite,
Take all garbage, large and small.

PACK IT IN!
PACK IT OUT!

TRAVEL

Trails are an important part of backcountry travel. They are designed to get people from one place to another with varying degrees of difficulty.

Trails are also designed to drain off water with a minimum amount of soil erosion. Make an effort to stay on the trails no matter how you are traveling.

Switchbacks are the most abused portion of the trail system. A switchback is a reversal in trail direction. Many people shortcut switchbacks and create new trails trying to save time and energy.

Cutting switchbacks creates a new scar on the hillside that will cause soil erosion and scarring.

Thank you for your help in making forest visits enjoyable and safe! Plan ahead by obtaining a National Forest map at one of the following offices:

Hume Lake Ranger District
35860 East Kings Canyon Road
Dunlap, CA 93621
[559-338-2251](tel:559-338-2251)

Kern River Ranger District
11380 Kernville Rd.
Kernville, CA 93238
[760-376-3781](tel:760-376-3781)

Western Divide Ranger District
32588 Hwy 190
Springville, CA 93265
[559-539-2607](tel:559-539-2607)

Forest Supervisor's Office
220 E Morton Ave
Porterville, CA 93257
[559-784-1500](tel:559-784-1500)



WHAT'S NEEDED AND WHAT'S NOT

- Brightly colored clothing and packs can be seen for long distances and contribute to a crowded feeling.
- Consider choosing earth-tone colors to lessen the visual impact.
- Consider carrying a lightweight backpacking stove for all cooking.
- Be sure to inquire locally about open fire restrictions, since some areas are closed due to the potential for wildfires or the scarcity of fuel.
- Lighten your pack by repacking the food and removing glass and aluminum packing. They do not burn and add extra weight. Check for local restrictions prohibiting cans and bottles.

IF YOU PACK IT IN, YOU SHOULD PACK IT OUT.

- Carry extra trash bags for litter pickup in and around your campsite. They also make great emergency rain gear.
- Other suggested equipment is a small trowel or plastic garden shovel for burying human waste and for digging Leave No Trace! fire pits.
- Leave the axe and saw at home, unless you are traveling by horse and need them to open a blocked trail.
- Firewood that cannot be broken by hand should be left as part of the natural system.

CROSS-COUNTRY

Hiking or riding horses cross-country, off established trails is okay, but remember to stay spread out and off "social trails" that other users have begun.

Avoid traveling through meadows and wet areas. They are fragile and will show the effect of footprints or hoof prints and group travel much longer than forested and rocky areas.

Bicycles and motorized vehicles are allowed in some backcountry areas but not in wildernesses. To ride them cross-country will create social trails and cause erosion.

The feeling of solitude or adventure is broken when you see ribbons, signs, or even blazed trees that visitors have left to mark a path. Always discuss the planned route with your group members to avoid leaving these markers. If you must mark a route, remove markers before departing.