

Leave No Trace Along the Long Trail



The last in a series of articles highlighting the principles of Leave No Trace, a program dedicated to promoting responsible recreation by teaching minimum-impact practices and wildland ethics.

The Seven Principles

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Respect Wildlife

Seeing, hearing, and observing the signs of wildlife are among the joys of being on the trail. Just imagine watching a peregrine falcon as it soars high above the Great Cliff of Mount Horrid, or catching a predawn glimpse of a moose wading across Sterling Pond. We are fortunate to share the woods with wild creatures; yet wildlife is threatened by loss and fragmentation



COURTESY: LEAVE NO TRACE

of habitat, pollution, and disease. Keeping the following in mind will help you protect wildlife as you travel and camp on the Long Trail.

Observe Wildlife from a Distance

For your own safety as well as the animal's.

Avoid Sensitive Times and Habitats

Call GMC to find out when and where.

Read signs at trailheads.

Never Feed Animals Increasing dependence on human handouts will take the wild out of wildlife and could endanger the feeder.

Store Food and Trash Securely

Always a challenge when mice are about, but this reduces chances for animals to become dependent on humans for food.

Control Your Pet A free roaming dog can upset breeding animals like bobcats and red foxes.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

The mountains of the Northeast are accessible to millions of people—a blessing and a curse. Their proximity makes it possible for many people to seek the solitude and quiet of the trail; yet, especially when it comes to well-traveled places like Mount Mansfield, such solitude can be elusive.

Therefore, our own behaviors and their impacts to other hikers assume even more importance.

Yield to Others Allow other hikers to enjoy the trail at their own paces.

Let Nature's Sounds Prevail Keep voices low; avoid using radios; keep pets quiet.

Keep Group Sizes Small Less than ten on overnight trips or day hikes to fragile areas. Larger groups should consider breaking into two or more subgroups.

In terms of your interactions with wildlife and other travelers, use your best judgment, allowing common sense and the Leave No Trace principles to be your guides. For more information or copies of previous articles in this series, contact Scott Smalley.