

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LOW IMPACT ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED BY THE LEAVE NO TRACE ORGANISATION.

PRINCIPLE 1: PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

PRINCIPLE 2: TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

PRINCIPLE 3: DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

PRINCIPLE 4: LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

PRINCIPLE 5: MINIMISE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

PRINCIPLE 6: RESPECT WILDLIFE

PRINCIPLE 7: BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS

PRINCIPLE 1: PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

ADEQUATE TRIP PLANNING AND PREPARATION HELPS GROUPS ACCOMPLISH TRIP GOALS SAFELY AND ENJOYABLY, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY MINIMISING DAMAGE TO THE LAND.

PRE-TRIP PLANNING

POOR PLANNING OFTEN RESULTS IN DAMAGE TO NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.

WHY IS TRIP PLANNING IMPORTANT?

- IT HELPS ENSURE THE SAFETY OF GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS.
- IT PREPARES YOU TO LEAVE NO TRACE AND MINIMISES RESOURCE DAMAGE.
- IT CONTRIBUTES TO ACCOMPLISHING TRIP GOALS SAFELY AND ENJOYABLY.
- IT INCREASES SELF-CONFIDENCE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT NATURE.

SEVEN ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING A TRIP

1. IDENTIFY AND RECORD THE GOALS (EXPECTATIONS) OF YOUR TRIP.
2. IDENTIFY THE SKILL AND ABILITY OF TRIP PARTICIPANTS.
3. SELECT DESTINATIONS THAT MATCH YOUR GOALS, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES.
4. GAIN KNOWLEDGE OF THE AREA YOU PLAN TO VISIT FROM LAND MANAGERS, MAPS, AND LITERATURE.
5. CHOOSE EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING FOR COMFORT, SAFETY, AND LEAVE NO TRACE QUALITIES.
6. PLAN TRIP ACTIVITIES TO MATCH YOUR GOALS, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES.
7. EVALUATE YOUR TRIP UPON RETURN, NOTE CHANGES YOU WILL MAKE NEXT TIME.

OTHER ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER:

- WEATHER
- TERRAIN
- REGULATIONS/RESTRICTIONS
- PRIVATE LAND BOUNDARIES
- AVERAGE HIKING SPEED OF GROUP & ANTICIPATED FOOD CONSUMPTION (LEFTOVERS CREATE WASTE WHICH *LEAVES A TRACE!*)
- GROUP SIZE (DOES IT MEET REGULATIONS, TRIP PURPOSE AND *LEAVE NO TRACE* CRITERIA)

MEAL PLANNING

MEALS ARE ANOTHER ELEMENT TO TRIP PLANNING THAT CAN HAVE A PROFOUND EFFECT ON THE IMPACT A GROUP HAS ON AN AREA.

BENEFITS OF GOOD MEAL PLANNING

- REDUCED RUBBISH.
- REDUCED PACK WEIGHT, RESULTING IN FASTER WALKING TIMES AND LESS FATIGUE.
- REDUCED DEPENDENCE UPON CAMPFIRES FOR COOKING.
- ONE-POT MEALS AND FOOD REPACKAGING

PLANNING FOR ONE-POT MEALS AND LIGHT WEIGHT SNACKS REQUIRES A MINIMUM OF PACKING AND PREPARATION TIME, LIGHTEN LOADS AND DECREASES RUBBISH. ONE-POT MEALS REQUIRE MINIMAL COOKING UTENSILS AND ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR A CAMPFIRE. USE BACKPACK STOVES TO COOK MEALS. REMEMBER, A STOVE *LEAVES NO TRACE*.

MOST FOOD SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM ITS COMMERCIAL PACKING AND PLACED IN SEALABLE BAGS BEFORE PACKING YOUR BACKPACKS. SEALABLE BAGS SECURE FOOD AND REDUCE BULK AND RUBBISH. EMPTY BAGS CAN BE PLACED INSIDE EACH OTHER AND PACKED OUT FOR REUSE AT HOME. THIS METHOD CAN REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF RUBBISH YOU PACK OUT AT THE END OF THE TRIP.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THE RESULTS OF POOR TRIP PLANNING

- THOSE WHO ARE INEXPERIENCED OR UNFAMILIAR WITH THE GEOGRAPHY OF AN AREA MAY:
 - CREATE RISK BY TRAVELLING THROUGH AREAS SUSCEPTIBLE TO FLASH FLOODS,
 - CREATE RISK BY TRAVELLING ALONG RIDGE TOPS VULNERABLE TO LIGHTNING ACTIVITY,
 - FAIL TO CARRY ADEQUATE WATER THROUGH ARID LAND OR HAVE WAYS OF PURIFYING WATER FROM NATURAL SOURCES.
- A POORLY PREPARED GROUP MAY PLAN TO COOK MEALS OVER A CAMPFIRE ONLY TO DISCOVER UPON ARRIVAL AT THEIR

DESTINATION THAT A FIRE BAN IS IN EFFECT OR THAT FIREWOOD IS IN SCARCE SUPPLY. SUCH GROUPS OFTEN BUILD A FIRE ANYWAY, BREAKING THE LAW OR IMPACTING THE LAND SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT PLANNED ALTERNATIVES. FIRE BANS AND SCARCE WOOD SUPPLIES ARE SIGNS THAT AN AREA IS EXPERIENCING CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF HEAVY RECREATION USE.

- A GROUP THAT HAS FAILED TO DEVELOP GOOD TRAVEL PLANS MAY BE UNABLE TO TRAVEL AS FAST AS EXPECTED. THE TERRAIN MAY BE TOO STEEP OR THE TRAILS TOO RUGGED. THESE GROUPS OFTEN RESORT TO SETTING UP CAMP LATE AT NIGHT, SOMETIMES IN AN UNSAFE LOCATION. POOR CAMPSITE SELECTION USUALLY LEADS TO UNNECESSARY RESOURCE DAMAGE. IN ADDITION, THE GROUP MAY NEVER EVEN REACH THEIR PLANNED DESTINATION.

SOAP & DEODORANT AND LOTIONS

THE VERY CONTROVERSIAL USE OF SOAP (AND *TOOTHPASTE*) IN OUR HIGHLY SENSITIVE WILDERNESS RIVERS AND STREAMS, WHICH IS ALSO A COMPLETE NO-NO OF COURSE! LEAVE SOAP BEHIND! EVEN WHEN IT'S BIODEGRADABLE, IT CAN AFFECT THE WATER QUALITY OF LAKES AND STREAMS. IF YOU WANT TO USE SOAP, USE THE NO-RINSE BRAND WHICH WAS DEVELOPED FOR ASTRONAUTS. NO WATER AT ALL IS REQUIRED, AND YOU WILL NOT POLLUTE WATER SOURCES. SWIMMING IN ROCK POOLS AFTER USING SUNBLOCK OR LOTION IS ALSO CONTROVERSIAL. IT IS OFTEN SEEN FLOATING LIKE OIL ON THE WATER AFTERWARDS. LOTION, SUNSCREEN, INSECT REPELLENT AND BODY OILS CAN CONTAMINATE THESE VITAL WATER SOURCES. WHERE FRESH WATER IS SCARCE, THINK TWICE BEFORE SWIMMING IN BODIES OF WATER. DEODORANT IS ONE MORE THING TO CARRY AND HAS AN IMPACT ON THE PLANET. INSTEAD TRY THE FOLLOWING:

- DUST BABY POWDER ON YOUR DAMP SPOTS TO DRY THEM.
- LEMON JUICE HIDES MOST SMELLS.
- BAKING POWDER OR CORN STARCH RUBBED UNDER YOUR ARMS WORKS AS A NATURAL DEODORISER.

PRINCIPLE 2: TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

THE GOAL OF WILDERNESS TRAVEL IS TO MOVE THROUGH THE WILDERNESS WHILE AVOIDING DAMAGE TO THE LAND. UNDERSTANDING HOW TRAVEL CAUSES IMPACT IS NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL. TRAVEL DAMAGE OCCURS WHEN SURFACE VEGETATION OR COMMUNITIES OF ORGANISMS ARE TRAMPLED BEYOND RECOVERY. THE RESULTING BARREN AREA LEADS TO SOIL EROSION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNDESIRABLE TRAILS. WILDERNESS TRAVEL MAY INVOLVE MOVE OVER BOTH TRAILS AND OFF-TRAIL AREAS.

TRAVEL ON-TRAIL

CONCENTRATE ACTIVITIES WHEN TRAVELLING IN HEAVILY USED AREAS LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES CONSTRUCT TRAILS IN WILDERNESS AREAS TO PROVIDE IDENTIFIABLE ROUTES THAT CONCENTRATE FOOT AND STOCK TRAFFIC. CONSTRUCTED TRAILS DO HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE LAND; HOWEVER, THEY ARE A NECESSARY RESPONSE TO THE FACT THAT PEOPLE TRAVEL IN THE AREA. CONCENTRATING TRAVEL ON TRAILS REDUCES THE LIKELIHOOD THAT MULTIPLE ROUTES WILL DEVELOP TO SCAR THE LANDSCAPE. IT IS BETTER TO HAVE ONE WELL-DESIGNED ROUTE THAN MANY POORLY CHOSEN PATHS.

- TRAIL USE IS RECOMMENDED WHENEVER POSSIBLE.
- STAY WITHIN THE WIDTH OF THE TRAIL AND DO NOT SHORT CUT TRAIL SWITCHBACKS (TRAIL ZIGZAGS THAT CLIMB HILL SIDES).
- PROVIDE SPACE FOR OTHER PEOPLE WHEN TAKING BREAKS ALONG THE TRAIL.
- THE PRINCIPLES OF OFF-TRAIL TRAVEL SHOULD BE PRACTICED IF THE DECISION IS MADE TO MOVE OFF-TRAIL FOR BREAKS.
- PEOPLE IN THE SAME GROUP SHOULD PERIODICALLY STOP TO REST AND TALK.
- AVOID SHOUTING TO COMMUNICATE WHILE HIKING. LOUD NOISES USUALLY ARE NOT WELCOME IN NATURAL AREAS.

TRAVEL OFF-TRAIL

ALL TRAVEL THAT DOES NOT UTILISE A DESIGNED TRAIL SUCH AS TRAVEL TO REMOTE AREAS, SEARCHES FOR BATHROOM PRIVACY, AND EXPLORATIONS NEAR AND AROUND CAMPSITES IS DEFINED AS OFF-TRAIL.

TWO PRIMARY FACTORS INCREASE HOW OFF-TRAIL TRAVEL AFFECTS THE LAND:

- DURABILITY OF SURFACES AND VEGETATION,
- AND FREQUENCY OF TRAVEL (OR GROUP SIZE).

CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

DURABILITY REFERS TO THE ABILITY OF SURFACES OR VEGETATION TO WITHSTAND WEAR OR REMAIN IN A STABLE CONDITION. FREQUENCY OF USE AND LARGE GROUP SIZE INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD THAT A LARGE AREA WILL BE TRAMPLED, OR THAT A SMALL AREA WILL BE TRAMPLED MULTIPLE TIMES. THE CONCEPT OF DURABILITY IS AN IMPORTANT ONE FOR ALL WILDERNESS TRAVELLERS TO UNDERSTAND.

THE FOLLOWING NATURAL SURFACES RESPOND DIFFERENTLY TO WILDERNESS TRAVEL.

- ROCK, SAND AND GRAVEL: THESE SURFACES ARE HIGHLY DURABLE AND CAN TOLERATE REPEATED TRAMPLING AND SCUFFING. (HOWEVER, LICHENS THAT GROW ON ROCKS ARE VULNERABLE TO REPEATED SCUFFING.)
- ICE AND SNOW: THE EFFECT OF TRAVEL ACROSS THESE SURFACES IS TEMPORARY, MAKING THEM GOOD CHOICES FOR TRAVEL ASSUMING GOOD SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ARE FOLLOWED, AND THE SNOW LAYER IS OF SUFFICIENT DEPTH TO PREVENT VEGETATION DAMAGE.
- VEGETATION: THE RESISTANCE OF VEGETATION TO TRAMPLING VARIES. CAREFUL DECISIONS MUST BE MADE WHEN TRAVELLING ACROSS VEGETATION. SELECT AREAS OF DURABLE VEGETATION, OR SPARSE VEGETATION THAT IS EASILY AVOIDED. • • DRY GRASSES TEND TO BE RESISTANT TO TRAMPLING. WET MEADOWS AND OTHER FRAGILE VEGETATION QUICKLY SHOW THE EFFECTS OF TRAMPLING. TRAMPLING ENSURES NEW TRAVELLERS WILL TAKE THE SAME ROUTE AND LEADS TO UNDESIRABLE TRAIL DERAILMENT. AS A GENERAL RULE, TRAVELLERS WHO MUST VENTURE OFF-TRAIL SHOULD SPREAD OUT TO AVOID CREATING PATHS

THAT ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO FOLLOW. AVOID VEGETATION WHENEVER POSSIBLE, ESPECIALLY ON STEEP SLOPES WHERE THE EFFECTS OF OFF-TRAIL TRAVEL ARE MAGNIFIED.

- CRYPTOBIOTIC CRUST ("CRYPTO"): CRYPTOBIOTIC CRUST, FOUND IN DESERT ENVIRONMENTS, IS EXTREMELY VULNERABLE TO FOOT TRAFFIC. CRYPTOBIOTIC CRUST CONSISTS OF TINY COMMUNITIES OF ORGANISMS THAT APPEAR AS A BLACKISH AND IRREGULAR RAISED CRUST UPON THE SAND. THIS CRUST RETAINS MOISTURE IN DESERT CLIMATES AND PROVIDES A PROTECTIVE LAYER, PREVENTING EROSION. ONE FOOTSTEP CAN DESTROY "CRYPTO". IT IS IMPORTANT TO USE DEVELOPED TRAILS IN THESE AREAS. TRAVEL ACROSS "CRYPTO" SHOULD ONLY BE DONE WHEN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. WALK ON ROCKS OR OTHER DURABLE SURFACES IF YOU MUST TRAVEL OFF-TRAIL. IN BROAD AREAS OF "CRYPTO", WHERE DAMAGE IS UNAVOIDABLE, IT IS BEST TO FOLLOW IN ONE ANOTHER'S FOOTSTEPS, SO THE SMALLEST AREA OF CRUST IS AFFECTED, EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE RULE FROM TRAVEL THROUGH VEGETATION. (CRYPTOBIOTIC CRUST IS ALSO EXTREMELY VULNERABLE TO MOUNTAIN BICYCLE TRAVEL.)
- DESERT PUDDLES AND MUD HOLES: WATER IS A PRECIOUSLY SCARCE RESOURCE FOR ALL LIVING THINGS IN THE DESERT. DON'T WALK THROUGH DESERT PUDDLES, MUD HOLES, OR DISTURB SURFACE WATER IN ANY WAY. POTHOLES ARE ALSO HOME TO TINY DESERT ANIMALS.

SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE CAMPSITE IS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF LOW-IMPACT WILDERNESS USE. IT REQUIRES THE GREATEST USE OF JUDGMENT AND INFORMATION AND OFTEN INVOLVES MAKING TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN MINIMISING ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS. A DECISION ABOUT WHERE TO CAMP SHOULD BE BASED ON INFORMATION ABOUT THE LEVEL AND TYPE OF USE IN THE AREA, THE FRAGILITY OF VEGETATION AND SOIL, THE LIKELIHOOD OF WILDLIFE DISTURBANCE, AN ASSESSMENT OF PREVIOUS IMPACTS, AND YOUR GROUP'S POTENTIAL TO CAUSE OR AVOID IMPACT.

CHOOSING A CAMPSITE IN HIGH-USE AREAS

- AVOID CAMPING CLOSE TO WATER AND TRAILS AND SELECT A SITE WHICH IS NOT VISIBLE TO OTHERS. EVEN IN POPULAR AREAS THE SENSE OF SOLITUDE CAN BE ENHANCED BY SCREENING CAMPSITES AND CHOOSING AN OUT-OF-THE-WAY SITE. CAMPING AWAY FROM THE WATER'S EDGE ALSO ALLOWS ACCESS ROUTES FOR WILDLIFE. BE SURE TO OBEY REGULATIONS RELATED TO CAMPSITE SELECTION. ALLOW ENOUGH TIME AND ENERGY AT THE END OF THE DAY TO SELECT AN APPROPRIATE SITE. FATIGUE, BAD WEATHER, AND LATE DEPARTURE TIMES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE EXCUSES FOR CHOOSING POOR OR FRAGILE CAMP SITES.
- GENERALLY, IT IS BEST TO CAMP ON SITES THAT ARE SO HIGHLY IMPACTED THAT FURTHER CAREFUL USE WILL CAUSE NO NOTICEABLE IMPACT. IN POPULAR AREAS, THESE SITES ARE OBVIOUS BECAUSE THEY HAVE ALREADY LOST THEIR VEGETATION COVER. ALSO, IT IS OFTEN POSSIBLE TO FIND A SITE WHICH NATURALLY LACKS VEGETATION, SUCH AS EXPOSED BEDROCK OR SANDY AREAS.
- ON HIGH-IMPACT SITES, TENTS, TRAFFIC ROUTES, AND KITCHEN AREAS SHOULD BE CONCENTRATED ON ALREADY IMPACTED AREAS. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO CONFINE IMPACT TO PLACES WHICH ALREADY SHOW USE AND AVOID ENLARGING THE AREA OF DISTURBANCE.
- WHEN LEAVING CAMP, MAKE SURE THAT IT IS CLEAN, ATTRACTIVE, AND APPEALING TO OTHER CAMPERS WHO FOLLOW.

CAMPING IN UNDISTURBED REMOTE AREAS

PRISTINE AREAS ARE USUALLY REMOTE, SEE FEW VISITORS, AND HAVE NO OBVIOUS IMPACTS. VISIT THESE SPECIAL PLACES ONLY IF YOU ARE COMMITTED TO, AND HIGHLY SKILLED IN, LEAVE NO TRACE TECHNIQUES.

- IN PRISTINE SITES IT IS BEST TO SPREAD OUT TENTS, AVOID REPETITIVE TRAFFIC ROUTES, AND MOVE CAMP EVERY NIGHT. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO MINIMISE THE NUMBER OF TIMES ANY PART OF THE SITE IS TRAMPLED.
- WHEN SETTING UP CAMP, DISPERSE TENTS AND THE KITCHEN ON DURABLE SITES.
- WEAR SOFT SHOES AROUND CAMP.
- MINIMISE ACTIVITY AROUND THE KITCHEN AND PLACES WHERE PACKS ARE STASHED.
- THE DURABLE SURFACES OF LARGE ROCK SLABS MAKE GOOD KITCHEN SITES.
- WATCH WHERE YOU WALK TO AVOID CRUSHING VEGETATION AND TAKE ALTERNATE PATHS TO WATER.
- MINIMISE THE NUMBER OF TRIPS TO WATER BY CARRYING WATER CONTAINERS. CHECK REGULATIONS BUT CAMPING 60 METRES (70 ADULT STEPS) FROM WATER IS A GOOD RULE OF THUMB.
- WHEN BREAKING CAMP, TAKE TIME TO NATURALISE THE SITE. COVERING SCUFFED AREAS WITH NATIVE MATERIALS (SUCH AS PINE NEEDLES), BRUSHING OUT FOOTPRINTS, AND RAKING MATTED GRASSY AREAS WITH A STICK WILL HELP THE SITE RECOVER AND MAKE IT LESS OBVIOUS AS A CAMPSITE. THIS EXTRA EFFORT WILL HELP HIDE ANY INDICATION WHERE YOU CAMPED AND MAKE IT LESS LIKELY THAT OTHER BACKCOUNTRY TRAVELLERS WILL CAMP IN THE SAME SPOT. THE LESS OFTEN A PRISTINE CAMPSITE IS USED THE BETTER CHANCE IT HAS OF REMAINING PRISTINE.

CAMPING IN ARID LANDS

THE MOST APPROPRIATE CAMPSITES IN ARID LANDS ARE ON DURABLE SURFACES, SUCH AS ROCK AND GRAVEL, OR ON SITES THAT HAVE BEEN SO HIGHLY IMPACTED FURTHER USE WILL CAUSE NO ADDITIONAL DISTURBANCE. PREVIOUSLY IMPACTED SITES ARE OBVIOUS BECAUSE THEY HAVE ALREADY LOST THEIR VEGETATION COVER, OR THE ROCKY SOILS HAVE BEEN VISIBLY DISTURBED.

- IF CHOOSING THIS TYPE OF SITE, MAKE SURE YOUR SPOT IS LARGE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR ENTIRE GROUP.
- A PRISTINE CAMPSITE, WITH NO EVIDENCE OF PREVIOUS USE, IS APPROPRIATE IN ARID LANDS PROVIDED IT IS ON A NON-VEGETATED, HIGHLY RESISTANT SURFACE. EXPANSES OF ROCK, GRAVEL OR SAND ARE ALL EXCELLENT CHOICES. IT SHOULD NEVER BE NECESSARY TO CAMP ON CRYPTOBIOTIC SOIL, ISLANDS OF VEGETATION, OR WITHIN THE PRECIOUS GREEN RIBBONS OF DESERT CREEKS OR STREAMS. BEWARE WHEN CAMPING ON SANDY RIVER BOTTOMS AND AREAS SUSCEPTIBLE TO FLASH FLOODS.
- COOKING AREAS, TENTS AND BACKPACKS SHOULD BE LOCATED ON ROCK, SAND, OR GRAVEL. CONSCIOUSLY CHOOSE DURABLE ROUTES OF TRAVEL BETWEEN PARTS OF YOUR CAMP SO THAT CONNECTING TRAILS DO NOT DEVELOP. VARY YOUR ROUTES SINCE THE OBJECTIVE IS TO MINIMISE THE AMOUNT OF TRAMPLING AND COMPACTION ON ANY SPECIFIC PART OF THE CAMPSITE.

- LIMIT YOUR STAY TO NO MORE THAN TWO NIGHTS.
- NEVER SCRAPE AWAY OR CLEAN SITES OF ORGANIC LITTER - LIKE LEAVES - AND ALWAYS MINIMISE THE REMOVAL OF ROCKS AND GRAVEL. ORGANIC LITTER WILL HELP TO CUSHION TRAMPLING FORCES, LIMIT THE COMPACT ABILITY OF SOILS, RELEASE PLANT NUTRIENTS AND REDUCE THE EROSION FORCES OF RAINFALL. DISTURBING THE LICHEN-COATED AND VARNISHED ROCKS KNOWN AS DESERT PAVEMENT CAN LEAVE A VISIBLE IMPACT FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS. ONCE OVERTURNED, THESE ROCKS ARE DIFFICULT TO REPLACE, AND THE LICHENS AND VARNISH WILL NOT GROW BACK WITHIN OUR LIFETIME.

CAMPING IN RIVER CORRIDORS

RIVER CORRIDORS ARE NARROW STRIPS OF LAND AND WATER WITH LITTLE ROOM TO DISPERSE HUMAN ACTIVITIES. CAMPSITES ARE OFTEN DESIGNATED. IT IS GENERALLY BEST TO CAMP ON ESTABLISHED SITES LOCATED ON BEACHES, SANDBARS, OR NON-VEGETATED SITES BELOW THE HIGH-WATER LINE.

PRINCIPLE 3: DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

HUMAN WASTE

PROPER DISPOSAL OF HUMAN WASTE IS IMPORTANT TO AVOID POLLUTION OF WATER SOURCES, AVOID THE NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF SOMEONE ELSE FINDING IT, MINIMISE THE POSSIBILITY OF SPREADING DISEASE, AND MAXIMISE THE RATE OF DECOMPOSITION. IN MOST LOCATIONS, BURYING HUMAN FAECES IN THE CORRECT MANNER IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD TO MEET THESE CRITERIA.

SOLID HUMAN WASTE MUST BE PACKED OUT (REMOVED) FROM SOME PLACES, SUCH AS NARROW RIVER GORGES. CONTRARY TO POPULAR OPINION, RESEARCH INDICATES THAT BURIAL OF FAECES ACTUALLY SLOWS DECOMPOSITION IN DRY SOILS. PATHOGENS HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED TO SURVIVE FOR A YEAR OR MORE WHEN BURIED. HOWEVER, CONSIDERING THE OTHER PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH FAECES, IT IS STILL GENERALLY BEST TO BURY IT. THE SLOW DECOMPOSITION RATE CAUSES THE NEED TO CHOOSE THE CORRECT LOCATION, FAR FROM WATER, MOIST GROUND, CAMPSITES, AND OTHER FREQUENTLY USED PLACES. HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY IN PRISTINE MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS AREAS, IT IS BETTER NOT TO DIG; THIS DISTURBS THE NATURAL VEGETATION, SOMETIMES IRREPARABLY. ADVICE IS TO SELECT AN APPROPRIATE LOCATION, THEN COVER WITH A STONE, TAKING TOILET PAPER OUT IN ZIPLOCK BAG, PLACED IN ANOTHER ZIPLOCK BAG. YOUR GUIDE CAN ADVISE YOU OF SPECIFIC RULES FOR THE AREA YOU PLAN TO VISIT.

IN THE DRAKENSBERG AND CEDERBERG, A HUGE PROBLEM IS DEVELOPING WHERE HIKERS USE ROCK SHELTERS ADJOINING SLEEPING CAVES AS TOILETS. BECAUSE THESE AREAS ARE DRY, THE TOILET PAPER, TAMPONS AND FAECES NEVER REALLY BIODEGRADE, AND THESE AREAS QUICKLY BECOME FILTHY. TOILET PROCEDURE SHOULD ALSO NEVER HAPPEN UNDER ROCK OVERHANGS THAT NEVER RECEIVE RAIN. IT SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN OPEN GRASSLAND OR FOREST AREAS THAT RECEIVE RAIN, AWAY FROM RIVERS AND STREAMS, AND AWAY FROM PATHS AND 'WAYS TO GO'.

CAT-HOLE

THE MOST WIDELY ACCEPTED METHOD OF WILDERNESS HUMAN WASTE DISPOSAL IS CAT-HOLES.

THE ADVANTAGES OF CAT-HOLE

- THEY ARE EASY TO DIG IN MOST AREAS.
- THEY ARE EASY TO DISGUISE AFTER USE.
- THEY ARE PRIVATE.
- THEY DISPERSE THE WASTE RATHER THAN CONCENTRATE IT (WHICH ENHANCES DECOMPOSITION).
- IT IS USUALLY EASY TO SELECT AN OUT OF THE WAY LOCATION WHERE YOU CAN BE CERTAIN NO ONE IS GOING TO CASUALLY ENCOUNTER THE CAT-HOLE.

SELECTING A CAT-HOLE SITE

- SELECT A CAT-HOLES SITE FAR FROM WATER SOURCES, 60 METRES IS THE RECOMMENDED RANGE.
- SELECT AN INCONSPICUOUS SITE UNTRAVELLED BY PEOPLE. EXAMPLES OF CAT-HOLES SITES INCLUDE THICK UNDERGROWTH, NEAR DOWNED TIMBER, OR ON GENTLE HILLSIDES.
- IF CAMPING WITH A GROUP OR IF CAMPING IN THE SAME PLACE FOR MORE THAN ONE NIGHT, DISPERSE THE CAT-HOLES OVER A WIDE AREA; DON'T GO TO THE SAME PLACE TWICE.
- TRY TO FIND A SITE WITH DEEP ORGANIC SOIL. THIS ORGANIC MATTER CONTAINS ORGANISMS WHICH WILL HELP DECOMPOSE THE FAECES. ORGANIC SOIL IS USUALLY DARK AND RICH IN COLOUR. THE DESERT DOES NOT HAVE AS MUCH ORGANIC SOIL AS A FORESTED AREA.
- IF POSSIBLE, LOCATE YOUR CAT-HOLE WHERE IT WILL RECEIVE MAXIMUM SUNLIGHT. THE HEAT FROM THE SUN WILL AID DECOMPOSITION.
- CHOOSE AN ELEVATED SITE WHERE WATER WOULD NOT NORMALLY FLOW DURING RUNOFF OR RAINSTORMS. THE IDEA HERE IS TO KEEP THE FAECES OUT OF WATER. OVER TIME, THE DECOMPOSING FAECES WILL PERCOLATE INTO THE SOIL BEFORE REACHING WATER SOURCES.

DIGGING A CAT-HOLE

- A SMALL GARDEN TROWEL IS THE PERFECT TOOL FOR DIGGING CAT-HOLES.
- DIG THE HOLE 15 CM DEEP (ABOUT THE LENGTH OF THE TROWEL BLADE) AND 10-15 CM IN DIAMETER. IN A HOT DESERT, HUMAN WASTE DOES NOT BIODEGRADE EASILY BECAUSE THERE IS LITTLE ORGANIC SOIL TO HELP BREAK IT DOWN. IN THE DESERT, CAT-HOLES SHOULD BE ONLY 6-10 CM DEEP. THIS WILL ALLOW THE HEAT AND SUN TO HASTEN THE DECAY PROCESS.
- WHEN FINISHED, THE CAT-HOLES SHOULD BE FILLED WITH THE ORIGINAL DIRT AND DISGUISED WITH NATIVE MATERIALS.

CAT-HOLE IN ARID LANDS

A CAT-HOLE IS THE MOST WIDELY ACCEPTED MEANS OF WASTE DISPOSAL IN ARID LANDS.

- LOCATE CAT-HOLES AT LEAST 200 FEET (ABOUT 70 ADULT STEPS) FROM WATER, TRAILS, AND CAMP.
- AVOID AREAS WHERE WATER VISIBLY FLOWS, SUCH AS SANDY WASHES, EVEN IF THEY ARE DRY AT THE MOMENT.
- SELECT A SITE THAT WILL MAXIMISE EXPOSURE TO THE SUN IN ORDER TO AID DECOMPOSITION. BECAUSE THE SUN'S HEAT WILL PENETRATE DESERT SOILS SEVERAL INCHES, IT CAN EVENTUALLY KILL PATHOGENS IF THE FAECES ARE BURIED PROPERLY. NORTH-FACING SLOPES AND RIDGE TOPS WILL HAVE MORE EXPOSURE TO SUN AND HEAT THAN OTHER AREAS.

TOILET PAPER & WET WIPES

USE TOILET PAPER & WIPES SPARINGLY AND USE ONLY PLAIN, WHITE, NON-PERFUMED BRANDS. THESE MUST BE DISPOSED OF PROPERLY! IT SHOULD EITHER BE THOROUGHLY BURIED IN A CAT-HOLE OR PLACED IN PLASTIC BAGS AND PACKED OUT. NATURAL TOILET PAPER HAS BEEN USED BY MANY CAMPER FOR YEARS. WHEN DONE CORRECTLY, THIS METHOD IS AS SANITARY AS REGULAR TOILET PAPER, BUT WITHOUT THE IMPACT PROBLEMS. POPULAR TYPES OF NATURAL TOILET PAPER INCLUDE STONES, VEGETATION AND SNOW. OBVIOUSLY, SOME EXPERIMENTATION IS NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS PRACTICE WORK FOR YOU, BUT IT IS WORTH A TRY! DO NOT BURN TOILET PAPER OR WASTE EVER. TOILET PAPER, WET WIPES, AND OTHER WASTE MUST BE CARRIED OUT WITH YOU! PLACING TOILET PAPER IN A PLASTIC BAG AND PACKING IT OUT AS TRASH IS THE BEST WAY TO LEAVE NO TRACE.

TAMPONS

PROPER DISPOSAL OF TAMPONS REQUIRES THAT THEY BE PLACED IN PLASTIC BAGS AND PACKED OUT. DO NOT BURY THEM BECAUSE THEY DON'T DECOMPOSE READILY, AND ANIMALS MAY DIG THEM UP. DO NOT BURN THEM!

URINE

URINE HAS LITTLE DIRECT EFFECT ON VEGETATION OR SOIL. IN SOME INSTANCES, URINE MAY DRAW WILDLIFE WHICH IS ATTRACTED TO THE SALTS. THEY CAN DEFOLIATE PLANTS AND DIG UP SOIL. URINATING ON ROCKS, PINE NEEDLES, AND GRAVEL IS LESS LIKELY TO ATTRACT WILDLIFE. DILUTING URINE WITH WATER FROM A WATER BOTTLE CAN HELP MINIMISE NEGATIVE EFFECTS.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RIVER GORGES: RIVER GORGES OFTEN PRESENT UNIQUE LEAVE NO TRACE PROBLEMS. THE MOST COMMON PRACTICE IS TO PACK OUT FAECES IN SEALED BOXES FOR LATER DISPOSAL. DO NOT URINATE IN THE WATER AS BILHARZIA IS SPREAD THIS WAY.

OTHER FORMS OF WASTE

"PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT" IS A FAMILIAR MANTRA TO SEASONED HIKERS. ANY USER OF RECREATION LAND HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO CLEAN UP BEFORE HE OR SHE LEAVES. INSPECT YOUR CAMPSITE AND REST AREAS FOR TRASH OR SPILLED FOODS. PACK OUT ALL TRASH AND GARBAGE. PLAN MEALS TO AVOID GENERATING MESSY, SMELLY GARBAGE. IT IS CRITICAL TO WILDLIFE THAT WE PACK OUT KITCHEN WASTE, SUCH AS GREASE AND LEFTOVERS. GARBAGE THAT IS HALF BURIED WILL STILL ATTRACT ANIMALS AS WELL MAKE A SITE UNATTRACTIVE TO OTHER VISITORS. OVERLOOKED TRASH IS LITTER, AND LITTER IS NOT ONLY UGLY - IT CAN ALSO BE DEADLY. PLASTIC BAGS, CIGARETTE BUTTS, FISHING LINE AND OTHER TRASH CAN BE HARMFUL TO OUR ENVIRONMENT WHEN NOT PROPERLY DISPOSED OF. CARRY PLASTIC BAGS TO HAUL OUT YOUR TRASH (AND MAYBE EVEN SOMEONE ELSE'S). BEFORE MOVING ON FROM A CAMP OR RESTING PLACE, SEARCH THE AREA FOR MICRO-TRASH SUCH AS BITS OF FOOD AND TRASH, INCLUDING ORGANIC LITTER LIKE ORANGE PEELS OR EGGSHELLS.

WASTEWATER

- TO WASH YOURSELF OR YOUR DISHES, CARRY WATER 100M AWAY FROM STREAMS OR LAKES. SCATTER STRAINED DISHWATER.
- CARRY HAND SANITISERS THAT DON'T REQUIRE RINSING.
- FOR DISHWASHING, USE A CLEAN POT OR OTHER CONTAINER TO COLLECT WATER, AND TAKE IT TO A WASH SITE AT LEAST 100M AWAY FROM WATER SOURCES. THIS LESSENS TRAMPLING OF LAKESHORES, RIVERBANKS AND SPRINGS, AND HELPS KEEP SOAP AND OTHER POLLUTANTS OUT OF THE WATER. USE HOT WATER, ELBOW GREASE, AND SOAP IF ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.
- STRAIN DIRTY DISHWATER WITH A FINE MESH STRAINER BEFORE SCATTERING IT BROADLY. DO THIS WELL AWAY FROM CAMP.
- PACK OUT CONTENTS OF THE STRAINER IN A PLASTIC BAG ALONG WITH ANY UNEATEN LEFTOVERS.

PRINCIPLE 4: LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

ALLOW OTHERS A SENSE OF DISCOVERY BY LEAVING ROCKS, PLANTS, ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL ARTEFACTS AND OTHER OBJECTS OF INTEREST AS YOU FIND THEM. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ADDRESSES A VARIETY OF WAYS TO RESPECT NATURAL SETTINGS.

LEAVE AREAS AS YOU FIND THEM.

- DO NOT DIG TRENCHES FOR TENTS OR CONSTRUCT LEAN-TOS, TABLES, CHAIRS, OR OTHER RUDIMENTARY IMPROVEMENTS.
- IF YOU CLEAR AN AREA OF SURFACE ROCKS, TWIGS OR PINECONES, REPLACE THESE ITEMS BEFORE LEAVING.
- ON HIGH IMPACT SITES, IT IS APPROPRIATE TO CLEAN UP THE SITE AND DISMANTLE INAPPROPRIATE USER-BUILT FACILITIES, SUCH AS MULTIPLE FIRE RINGS AND CONSTRUCTED SEATS OR TABLES.
- CONSIDER THE IDEA THAT GOOD CAMPSITES ARE FOUND AND NOT MADE.
- IN MANY LOCATIONS, PROPERLY LOCATED AND LEGALLY CONSTRUCTED FACILITIES, SUCH AS A SINGLE FIRE RING, SHOULD BE LEFT. DISMANTLING THEM WILL CAUSE ADDITIONAL IMPACT BECAUSE THEY WILL BE REBUILT WITH NEW ROCKS AND THUS IMPACT A NEW AREA.
- LEARN TO EVALUATE ALL SITUATIONS YOU FIND.

AVOID DAMAGING LIVE TREES AND PLANTS

- AVOID HAMMERING NAILS INTO TREES FOR HANGING THINGS, HACKING AT THEM WITH AXES AND SAWS, OR TYING TENT GUY LINES TO TRUNKS, THUS GIRDLING THE TREE.
- CARVING INITIALS INTO TREES IS UNACCEPTABLE.
- THE CUTTING OF BOUGHS FOR USE AS SLEEPING PADS CREATES MINIMAL BENEFIT AND MAXIMUM IMPACT. SLEEPING PADS ARE AVAILABLE AT STORES CATERING TO CAMPER.
- PICKING A FEW FLOWERS DOES NOT SEEM LIKE IT WOULD HAVE ANY GREAT IMPACT AND, IF ONLY A FEW FLOWERS WERE PICKED, IT WOULDN'T. BUT, IF EVERY VISITOR THOUGHT "I'LL JUST TAKE A FEW", A MUCH MORE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT MIGHT RESULT. TAKE A PICTURE OR SKETCH THE FLOWER INSTEAD OF PICKING IT.

LEAVE NATURAL OBJECTS AND CULTURAL ARTEFACTS

- NATURAL OBJECTS OF BEAUTY OR INTEREST SUCH AS BONES, ANTELOPE HORNS, PETRIFIED WOOD, OR COLOURED ROCKS ADD TO THE MOOD OF THE WILDERNESS AND SHOULD BE LEFT SO OTHERS CAN EXPERIENCE A SENSE OF DISCOVERY.
- IN NATIONAL PARKS AND SOME OTHER AREAS, IT IS ILLEGAL TO REMOVE NATURAL OBJECTS. THE SAME ETHIC IS APPLICABLE TO CULTURAL ARTEFACTS FOUND ON PUBLIC LAND. CULTURAL ARTEFACTS ARE PROTECTED. IT IS ILLEGAL TO REMOVE OR DISTURB ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES, HISTORIC SITES, OR ARTEFACTS SUCH AS POT SHARDS, ARROWHEADS, STRUCTURES, AND EVEN ANTIQUE BOTTLES FOUND ON PUBLIC LANDS.

PRINCIPLE 5: MINIMISE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

FIRES VS. STOVES

THE USE OF CAMPFIRES, ONCE A NECESSITY FOR COOKING AND WARMTH, IS STEEPED IN HISTORY AND TRADITION. SOME PEOPLE WOULD NOT THINK OF CAMPING WITHOUT A CAMPFIRE. CAMPFIRE BUILDING IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT SKILL FOR EVERY CAMPER. YET, THE NATURAL APPEARANCE OF MANY AREAS HAS BEEN DEGRADED BY THE OVERUSE OF FIRES AND AN INCREASING DEMAND FOR FIREWOOD. THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIGHT WEIGHT EFFICIENT CAMP STOVES HAS ENCOURAGED A SHIFT AWAY FROM THE TRADITIONAL FIRE. STOVES HAVE BECOME ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT FOR MINIMUM-IMPACT CAMPING. THEY ARE FAST, FLEXIBLE, AND ELIMINATE FIREWOOD AVAILABILITY AS A CONCERN IN CAMPSITE SELECTION. STOVES OPERATE IN ALMOST ANY WEATHER CONDITION, AND THEY LEAVE NO TRACE.

SHOULD YOU BUILD A FIRE?

IN SHORT, NO.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD YOU LIGHT AN OPEN FIRE IN THE WILDERNESS. THE RISK OF CAUSING A WILDFIRE IS TOO HIGH AND THE DAMAGE IS DEVASTATING. ON TRAILS WITH VDK, YOU WILL ONLY USE STOVES (EITHER LIQUID OR GAS FUELLED). IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT USING OR BUYING THE RIGHT STOVE, PLEASE CHECK WITH YOUR GUIDE BEFORE THE TRIP. *EVEN WHEN USING A STOVE, GREAT CARE MUST BE TAKEN.*

- FOLLOW ALL PRODUCT AND SAFETY LABELS FOR STOVES.
- MAKE SURE YOU CAN USE THE STOVE BEFORE THE TRIP.
- USE APPROVED CONTAINERS FOR FUEL.
- NEVER LEAVE A STOVE UNATTENDED.
- KEEP OTHER FUEL SOURCES AWAY FROM THE STOVE FLAMES.
- SET UP AND USE THE STOVE ON A FLAT ROCK AREA DESIGNATED BY YOUR GUIDE.
- PROVIDE ADEQUATE SUPERVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHEN USING STOVES.

PRINCIPLE 6: RESPECT WILDLIFE

- LEARN ABOUT WILDLIFE THROUGH QUIET OBSERVATION. DO NOT DISTURB WILDLIFE OR PLANTS JUST FOR A "BETTER LOOK".
- OBSERVE WILDLIFE FROM A DISTANCE SO THEY ARE NOT SCARED OR FORCED TO FLEE.
- LARGE GROUPS OFTEN CAUSE MORE DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT & DISTURBANCE TO WILDLIFE. IF YOU HAVE A LARGER GROUP, DIVIDE INTO SMALLER GROUPS, IF POSSIBLE, TO MINIMISE YOUR IMPACTS.
- QUICK MOVEMENTS AND LOUD NOISES ARE STRESSFUL TO ANIMALS.
- TRAVEL QUIETLY AND DO NOT PURSUE, FEED OR FORCE ANIMALS TO FLEE.
- IN HOT OR COLD WEATHER, DISTURBANCE CAN AFFECT AN ANIMAL'S ABILITY TO WITHSTAND THE RIGOROUS ENVIRONMENT.
- DO NOT TOUCH, GET CLOSE TO, FEED OR PICK UP WILD ANIMALS. IT IS STRESSFUL TO THE ANIMAL, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE ANIMAL MAY HARBOUR RABIES OR OTHER DISEASES. SICK OR WOUNDED ANIMALS CAN BITE, PECK OR SCRATCH AND SEND YOU TO THE HOSPITAL. YOUNG ANIMALS REMOVED OR TOUCHED BY WELL-MEANING PEOPLE MAY CAUSE THE ANIMALS PARENTS TO ABANDON THEM. IF YOU FIND SICK ANIMALS OR AN ANIMAL IN TROUBLE, NOTIFY A GAME WARDEN.
- CONSIDERATE GROUPS OBSERVE WILDLIFE FROM AFAR, GIVE ANIMALS A WIDE BERTH, STORE FOOD SECURELY, AND KEEP RUBBISH AND FOOD SCRAPS AWAY FROM ANIMALS. REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE A VISITOR TO THEIR HOME.
- ALLOW ANIMALS' FREE ACCESS TO WATER SOURCES BY GIVING THEM THE BUFFER SPACE THEY NEED TO FEEL SECURE. IDEALLY, CAMPS SHOULD BE LOCATED 60 METERS OR MORE FROM EXISTING WATER SOURCES. THIS WILL MINIMISE DISTURBANCE TO WILDLIFE AND ENSURE THAT ANIMALS HAVE ACCESS TO THEIR PRECIOUS DRINKING WATER. BY AVOIDING WATER HOLES AT NIGHT, YOU WILL BE LESS LIKELY TO FRIGHTEN ANIMALS BECAUSE DESERT DWELLERS ARE USUALLY MOST ACTIVE AFTER DARK. WITH LIMITED WATER IN ARID LANDS, DESERT TRAVELLERS MUST STRIVE TO REDUCE THEIR IMPACT ON THE ANIMALS STRUGGLING FOR SURVIVAL.
- WASHING AND HUMAN WASTE DISPOSAL MUST BE DONE CAREFULLY SO THE ENVIRONMENT IS NOT POLLUTED, AND ANIMALS AND AQUATIC LIFE ARE NOT INJURED. SWIMMING IN LAKES OR STREAMS IS FINE IN MOST INSTANCES BUT IN DESERT AREAS, LEAVE SCARCE WATER HOLES UNDISTURBED AND UNPOLLUTED SO ANIMALS MAY DRINK FROM THEM.

PRINCIPLE 7: BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF OUTDOOR ETHICS IS TO MAINTAIN COURTESY TOWARD OTHERS. IT HELPS EVERYONE ENJOY THEIR OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE.

- KEEP IN MIND THAT THE FEELING OF SOLITUDE, ESPECIALLY IN OPEN AREAS, IS ENHANCED WHEN THE GROUP SIZE IS SMALL, CONTACTS ARE INFREQUENT, AND BEHAVIOUR IS UNOBTRUSIVE.
- TECHNOLOGY CONTINUES TO SHAPE THE OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE. PERSONAL PREFERENCES RANGE FROM HIGH-TECH OUTDOOR TRAVELLERS, WHO MIGHT WANT TO LISTEN TO MUSIC AND COLLECT IMAGES ON THEIR DEVICES, TO AN ANTI-TECH PERSPECTIVE THAT FAVOURS A MINIMAL USE OF GADGETS. DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS BUT BE SURE TO THOROUGHLY CONSIDER HOW YOUR EXPERIENCE AFFECTS THE WAY SOMEONE ELSE ENJOYS THE OUTDOORS. MANY PEOPLE COME TO THE OUTDOORS TO LISTEN TO NATURE. EXCESSIVE NOISE, UNLEASHED/UNCONTROLLED PETS AND DAMAGED SURROUNDINGS TAKE AWAY FROM EVERYONE'S EXPERIENCE. SO, KEEP THE NOISE LEVEL DOWN WHILE TRAVELLING AND USE HEADPHONES/EARBUDS IF NECESSARY SO YOU WILL NOT DISTURB OTHERS. BUT IF YOU HAVE THE VOLUME TURNED SO HIGH THAT YOU CAN'T HEAR SOMEONE BEHIND YOU WHO WANTS TO PASS, YOUR PERSONAL PREFERENCE FOR MUSIC WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT OTHER PEOPLE.
- THE GENERAL ASSUMPTION ON A NARROW TRAIL IS THAT HIKERS HEADED DOWNHILL WILL STEP ASIDE TO ALLOW AN UPHILL FOOT TRAVELER TO EASILY PASS. BEFORE PASSING OTHERS, POLITELY ANNOUNCE YOUR PRESENCE AND PROCEED WITH CAUTION.
- GROUPS LEADING OR RIDING LIVESTOCK HAVE THE RIGHT-OF-WAY ON TRAILS. HIKERS AND BICYCLISTS SHOULD MOVE OFF THE TRAIL TO THE DOWNHILL SIDE. TALK QUIETLY TO THE RIDERS AS THEY PASS, SINCE HORSES ARE SPOOKED EASILY.
- TAKE REST BREAKS ON DURABLE SURFACES WELL OFF THE DESIGNATED TRAIL. TRAVEL QUIETLY AND LIGHTLY ON THE LAND.
- WHEN SELECTING A CAMPSITE, CHOOSE A SITE WHERE ROCKS OR TREES WILL SCREEN IT FROM OTHERS VIEW.
- KEEP NOISE DOWN IN CAMP SO NOT TO DISTURB OTHER CAMPERS OR THOSE PASSING BY ON THE TRAIL. "GOOFING OFF" OR "PRANKS" ARE UNDESIRABLE SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND MAY LEAD TO SERIOUS OR FATAL INJURIES. ALSO "EVENTS" NEED TO FIT THE SETTING - SAVE GAME PLAYING FOR THE CITY PARK.
- ALWAYS KEEP PETS UNDER CONTROL. DOGS ARE NOT IN THE WILDLIFE CATEGORY. DOGS RUNNING FREE CAN BE UNWELCOME OR FRIGHTEN PEOPLE. PLEASE PICK UP DOG FAECES FROM CAMPS AND TRAILS. SOME AREAS PROHIBIT DOGS OR REQUIRE THEM TO BE ON A LEASH.
- LEAVE GATES AS YOU FIND THEM AND LEAVE THE LAND UNDISTURBED FOR OTHERS TO ENJOY.
- REMEMBER THAT OUR OPEN SPACES AND WILD LANDS ARE PROTECTED FOR ALL GENERATIONS. IT IS UP TO US TO KEEP THEM HEALTHY, BEAUTIFUL AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR RECREATION, REFLECTION AND REVITALISATION! ENJOY AND LEARN FROM HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES BUT RESPECT THESE SITES AND TREASURES. SOME OF THESE ARE SACRED TO NATIVE TRIBES OR ARE IMPORTANT CULTURAL REMINDERS OF OUR HERITAGE. REMEMBER ALSO THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO CALL THIS HOME. THEY ARE NOT VISITORS, AND YOU ARE COMING INTO THEIR SPACE.

GUIDELINES FOR MINIMUM IMPACT LEAVE NO TRACE CULTURAL INTERACTIONS

- BE MINDFUL AND SENSITIVE AS TO HOW YOUR BEHAVIOUR IS (OR MAY BE) CHANGING THE NORMAL BEHAVIOUR OF THE PEOPLE YOU ARE INTERACTING WITH – PARTICULARLY CHILDREN.
- TRY TO AVOID OVER EXCITING CHILDREN – REMEMBER ADULTS DO NOT NORMALLY PLAY WITH CHILDREN IN RURAL VILLAGES – CHILDREN PLAY WITH CHILDREN. IT IS EASY TO INADVERTENTLY ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO OVERSTEP THE NORMAL LIMITS OF RESPECT BETWEEN CHILDREN AND ADULTS THAT THEY ARE USED TO IN THEIR CULTURE. TRY TO IMAGINE WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN YOU LEAVE?
- LIMIT THE NUMBER OF PHOTOGRAPHS YOU TAKE – PARTICULARLY OF CHILDREN – AND ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY START POSING AND ACTING FOR YOU.
- TRY TO ENSURE YOUR PHOTO SESSIONS ARE PART OF A FRIENDLY TWO-WAY INTERACTION – SHARE THE PICTURES YOU HAVE TAKEN ON YOUR CAMERA SCREEN. IDEALLY SEND PRINTS BACK VIA YOUR GUIDE OR TOUR OPERATOR.
- DON'T 'FAWN' OVER CHILDREN (GIVE THEM EXCESSIVE ATTENTION) – OR PERMIT THEM TO 'FAWN' OVER YOU. BE MINDFUL HOW ENCOURAGING THIS BEHAVIOUR CAN HELP TO MAKE IT BECOME HABITUAL. CHILDREN BEGIN TO THINK THIS BEHAVIOUR IS EXPECTED FROM THEM AND THIS 'FALSE' BEHAVIOUR WILL ALSO IMPACT ON THE EXPERIENCES OF FUTURE VISITORS.
- ONLY ALLOW CHILDREN TO BEHAVE WITH YOU AS THEY ARE EXPECTED TO BEHAVE WITH AND RESPECT ADULTS IN THEIR OWN CULTURE. BY ENCOURAGING AND ALLOWING THE OVERSTEPPING OF THESE BOUNDARIES YOU ARE CHANGING NORMAL CULTURAL BEHAVIOUR, 'LEAVING A TRACE', AND 'MAKING AN IMPACT'. THIS WILL HAVE REPERCUSSIONS LONG AFTER YOU HAVE LEFT, NOT ONLY FOR THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES, BUT FOR OTHER VISITORS COMING AFTER YOU. INSENSITIVE TOURISM CAN – AND DOES – GRADUALLY ERODE AND CHANGE CULTURAL NORMS AND LIMITS, WHICH HELPS TO CREATE AND UPHOLD UNFORTUNATE STEREOTYPES ABOUT AFRICA AND AFRICANS.
- REMEMBER CHILDREN BECOME TEENAGERS AND THEN ADULTS. UNFORTUNATELY, AS CHILDREN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER AND GROW UP INTO TEENAGERS AND ADULTS, THEY LEARN TO BEG FROM VISITORS, LOOSE THEIR CULTURAL DIGNITY AND SOMETIMES BEGIN TO DISPLAY INTIMIDATING BEHAVIOUR.
- IN EXTREME CASES 'FAWNING' OVER CHILDREN WHO MAY HAVE THEIR OWN LONELINESS ISSUES CAN LEAD TO PROMISCUITY, WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS INFO PACK, PLEASE TALK TO YOUR GUIDE. THEY WILL ASSIST YOU TO BE IN THE WILDERNESS ETHICALLY AND TO LEAVE NO TRACE.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ OUR LNT POLICY.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO EXPLORING WITH YOU!