



# *LEAVE NO TRACE*

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There are seven principles of Leave No Trace. It's important that Girl Scouts are familiar with these principles, considering so many of our activities happen in the outdoors. Let's go through each one and think about how the principles apply to Girl Scouts.

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- **PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE**



Before you start your outdoor adventure (no matter how small!), make sure you're prepared. Make sure you're familiar with regulations and special concerns about the area(s) you'll be visiting, and keep in mind high-traffic times. Avoiding crowds will not only prevent protected wildlife from getting trampled

- **TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES**

Whether you're visiting for a day or overnight, it's important to stick to durable surfaces, like established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grass, or snow. This is for the safety of everyone in your group as well as the safety of the environment. When we walk beyond established paths, we risk damaging vegetation and other organisms that can be damaged beyond recovery.

- **DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY**

One of the easiest ways to Leave No Trace is to dispose of any waste you've brought with you. If there are trash cans available, excellent! Use them for anything you no longer need, separating recyclable and compostable items if necessary. If there aren't any trash cans, bring it all with you. This includes packaging, leftover food, and other litter. And if you're camping overnight, don't forget to check that you've grabbed all of your clothing, camping gear, and anything else non-edible you may have left behind.





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## **LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND**

Girl Scouts love souvenirs as much as the next person, but during your outdoor adventure, the only souvenirs you should take are pictures! Leave rocks, plants, and other natural objects where you find them, and avoid building structures like forts or makeshift furniture. Leave those projects for your backyard.



## **MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACT**

While you may not be in a wildfire country, it's still incredibly important to minimize the impact of your campfire. Keep in mind regulations for where you're visiting (which you should've already researched as part of principle 1!), as fires might not be allowed. When and where fires are permitted, keep them as small as possible. Only use sticks that can be broken by hand, no tools required. Once you're done, make sure all wood and coals have burned to ash. Put out the fires completely, then scatter the ashes once they've cooled.



## **RESPECT WILDLIFE**

One of the best parts of spending time outdoors is seeing all the amazing wildlife. But as exciting as it is to see animals in the wild, remember that they should be observed from a distance and should never be fed. It damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers. Similarly, make sure food (including food waste!) is stored securely. Whether they're fed intentionally or find your food on accident, wildlife can be very negatively impacted by human food.



## **BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS**

Finally, remember to be considerate toward others, including those in your group. Ask questions courteously, avoid making loud noises, and yield to others on the trail. In short, be a sister to every Girl Scout—as well as every non-Girl Scout!

