



## Leave No Trace Principles

Handlers are expected to practice 'leave no trace' principles whenever hiking with their dogs. Generally, this refers to leaving the environment as it was before hiking or camping, or perhaps leaving it a little better than before, by picking up any trash that was left by others. These principles, sometimes referred to as 'take only memories, leave only footprints' are outlined below.

### PLAN AHEAD TO AVOID ANY IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

- Travel and camp in small groups where possible. Smaller groups limit trampling of fragile vegetation.
- Repackage foods to reduce the need to carry multiple containers.
- Take a trash bag and poop clean up bags so that all refuse can be more easily carried out.
- Pack light and take only the essentials needed.
- Research the park or area regarding dogs and any rules that may apply.
  - Are dogs allowed?
  - If allowed, are dogs required to be leashed?
  - Even if allowed, is there anything that might endanger the dog, such as venomous snakes, alligators, extremely steep or slippery trails, etc.?

### AVOID ANY IMPACT WHILE TRAVELING:

- Walk single file in the center of the trail.
- Stay on the main trail or other allowed areas. Obey any signs indicating that an area is off limits.
- Look at and photograph the beauty. Never collect or take anything with you, no matter how insignificant it may seem.
- Leave woodchips and leaves on paths and around tents. Avoid sweeping these off.
- Never allow dogs to chase wildlife or cause any disruption on the trail.
- Always pick up after your dog on the trail.

### MAKE 'NO TRACE' CAMPS:

- Never cut trees or limbs for firewood. Only use downed, dead wood or buy wood from the local area. Bringing in wood from out of the area can transport bugs that might not be local.
- Never carve initials into trees as this can open the tree to disease and infestation.
- Always keep campfires small and contained in a small fire circle.
- Avoid trampling vegetation.
- Brush teeth and wash at least 100 feet from a water source.
- Use only biodegradable soap.
- Cover human waste with a layer of soil.
- Be quiet. Loud music, voices, etc. are foreign to the woods and are not needed. Enjoy the natural sounds and be considerate of others.
- Pick up every trace of litter, no matter how small, even if it wasn't yours.
- Replace any rocks or logs that you move.
- Before leaving, check the area and remove any indications that you have been there.

Apply 'leave no trace' thinking wherever you go. Always remember that you and your companions, both human and canine are visitors in the environment. Respect all the plants and animals around you and make sure that those coming after you can enjoy the area just as you did.