

# MAKE IT YOUR NATURE TO PROTECT NORTH CAROLINA'S OUTDOOR SPACES

The North Carolina outdoors is really a reflection of you. That's why Visit NC, the NC Outdoor Recreation Industry and Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics have partnered together to make it easy for you to help preserve the natural beauty of our state.

## PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- North Carolina is home to endless opportunities for outdoor recreation. Before you travel, learn about your destination, its regulations and safety matters.
- Have a backup plan in case your chosen destination is crowded or parking areas are full.
- To reduce your impact, choose lesser-known areas and times of high use.
- Pack food, water and the right clothes to protect you from the elements.

## STICK TO TRAILS AND OVERNIGHT RIGHT

- Keep to designated trails and durable surfaces to protect trailside plants. Camp at existing or designated sites.
- Be cautious. Stay within your party's skill level. Know what to do in case of poor weather, rip currents, slick rocks around waterfalls, and other potential hazards
- In the backcountry, confine your impact to places that already show use, and limit the area of disturbance.
- Take rest breaks on durable surfaces off the designated trail so that others can pass.

## TRASH YOUR TRASH

- Pack it in, pack it out. Place all trash in garbage bags and carry it home. Food scraps, cigarette butts and other litter can take years to decompose and are unhealthy for wildlife.
- If adventuring with pets, plan to pack out their waste as well.
- When camping in remote areas, have a plan to dispose of human waste properly.

## LEAVE IT AS YOU FIND IT

- North Carolina is home to amazing diversity of indigenous plants and animals. Snap a picture instead of picking flowers, gathering shells and collecting pine cones.
- Leave rocks as you find them to protect critters' sensitive habitats, prevent erosion and avert other ecological impacts.
- Forgo carving into trees, which inflicts lasting damage and can kill the vegetation.
- Adhere to laws that prohibit the removal of natural objects from national parks and other protected places.

## BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE

- If you choose to have a fire, check on regulations, secure a permit if needed, and keep the fire small. If allowed, gather wood from the ground instead of breaking branches from trees. Buy firewood locally to avoid bringing in invasive species.
- Burn all wood to ash. Before leaving, check that the fire is completely out and ashes are cold.
- On overnight camping trips, use a stove for cooking.

## KEEP WILDLIFE WILD

- From black bears and wild horses to salamanders and birds, all wildlife should be treated with respect in the natural areas you are visiting.
- Observe creatures from a distance. Getting too close causes undue stress and harm.
- Refrain from feeding wild animals. It alters their natural behavior and puts them and you at risk.
- When camping, store food securely. Keep garbage and food scraps out of the reach of wildlife.

## SHARE OUR TRAILS

- People have a range of skill levels and different ideas about how to enjoy the outdoors. Respect others so that North Carolina's natural spaces will be welcoming and relaxing for all.
- Be considerate when passing others on the trail. Politely announce your presence and proceed with caution.
- Be mindful of your noise level so that others can listen to nature.
- Honor the rule of thumb that those traveling downhill will yield to those travelling uphill.

