

By practicing the Tread Lightly! principles, you not only care for the environment and reduce conflicts among recreationists, you help protect access to recreational areas for years to come.

Tread Lightly!® is a national nonprofit organization with a mission to promote responsible recreation through ethics education and stewardship. It is considered the nation's signature ethics message for outdoor enthusiasts that use motorized vehicles while enjoying trails and waterways. Tread Lightly! offers unique training and restoration programs strategically designed to instill an ethic of responsibility in a wide variety of outdoor enthusiasts and the industries that serve them.

- T** TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY
- R** RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS
- E** EDUCATE YOURSELF
- A** AVOID SENSITIVE AREAS
- D** DO YOUR PART

GEO CACHING



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TREAD LIGHTLY!'S
RESPONSIBLE RECREATION TIPS

TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY

Travel responsibly on designated roads, trails, or areas.

- ✔ If traveling by vehicle, stay on designated roads and trails.
- ✔ Don't create new routes or expand existing trails. Go over obstacles, not around.
- ✔ Cross streams only at fords where the road or trail crosses the stream.
- ✔ If hiking, walk single file to avoid widening the trail.
- ✔ Spread out in open country where there are no trails. Spreading out, rather than following each other's footsteps, disperses impact and avoids creating a new trail. If possible, travel on hardened surfaces such as gravel, slick rock or in sand washes.
- ✔ Use the "track back" feature on your Global Positioning System (GPS) unit rather than flagging and marking trails.
- ✔ Comply with all signs and respect barriers.
- ✔ Buddy up with two or three geocachers, reducing vulnerability if you have an accident or breakdown.

RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Respect the rights of others, including private property owners and all recreational trail users, campers and others so they can enjoy their recreational activities undisturbed.

- ✔ Be considerate of others on the road or trail.
- ✔ Leave gates as you find them.
- ✔ If crossing private property, be sure to ask permission from the landowner(s).
- ✔ Keep the noise down.
- ✔ If hiking, be especially cautious around bikes and motorized vehicles. Stay to the right of the trail and let them pass.
- ✔ If traveling by vehicle, yield the right of way to those passing you or traveling uphill. Yield to mountain bikers, hikers, and horses.
- ✔ Proceed with caution around horses and pack animals. Sudden, unfamiliar activity may spook animals—possibly causing injury to animals, handlers, and others on the trail.
- ✔ When encountering horses on the trail, move to the side of the trail. If traveling by vehicle, stop and turn off your engine, remove your helmet, and

ask the rider to know you are human. Ask the rider the best way to proceed.

- ✔ Keep the noise and dust down.
- ✔ Keep your pets under control; this protects your pet, other recreationists and wildlife.

EDUCATE YOURSELF

Educate yourself prior to a trip by obtaining travel maps and regulations from public agencies, planning for your trip, taking recreation skills classes, and knowing how to operate your equipment safely.

- ✔ Obtain a map—motor vehicle use map where appropriate—of your destination and determine which areas are open to your type of travel.
- ✔ Make a realistic plan and stick to it. Always tell someone of your travel plans.
- ✔ Familiarize yourself with restrictions and prohibitions in your area before you decide where to place a cache.
- ✔ The National Park Service (NPS) has strict geocaching regulations. Obtain permission first before leaving a cache on NPS lands.
- ✔ Check the weather forecast for your destination. Plan clothing, equipment, and supplies accordingly.
- ✔ Dressing in layers allows easier changing to accommodate unexpected weather conditions.
- ✔ In addition to your GPS receiver, always carry extra batteries, a map, compass, and know how to use them.
- ✔ Carry water and emergency supplies even on short trips.

AVOID SENSITIVE AREAS

Avoid sensitive areas such as meadows, lakeshores, wetlands and streams. Stay on designated routes.

- ✔ Avoid placing caches in sensitive habitats including wetlands, caves, steep slopes, cryptobiotic soils of the desert, tundra, and seasonal nesting or breeding areas.
- ✔ Avoid "spooking" livestock and wildlife you encounter and keep your distance.
- ✔ Motorized and mechanized vehicles are not allowed in designated Wilderness Areas.
- ✔ Do not place a cache in special areas including Wilderness Areas, Wild and Scenic River Corridors or near historic, cultural, archeological or paleontological sites.

DO YOUR PART

Do your part by modeling appropriate behavior, leaving the area better than you found it, properly disposing of waste, minimizing the use of fire, avoiding the spread of invasive species, and restoring degraded areas.

Cache Placers

- ✔ Build a relationship with local land owners or land management agencies, to ensure minimal impact of cache placement.
- ✔ Avoid burying a cache in the ground.
- ✔ It is the cache owner's responsibility to maintain the cache and the surrounding area. If a cache's area is impacted, confer with the land manager on how you will mitigate the impacts and seek their advice as to whether to relocate the cache.
- ✔ Never place food items in a cache.
- ✔ Don't modify the environment for any reason, even when hiding a cache.

Cache Seekers

- ✔ Use maps to find a route that will minimize impacts. Note waypoints during your journey to assist you on your return trip.
- ✔ If you notice a path has started to wear in the vicinity of a cache, notify the cache owner via email.
- ✔ Practice the "lift, look, replace" technique if you lift a rock to look under it. Replace it exactly as you found it.
- ✔ After you've finished searching for a cache, the area should look as though you were never there or better than when you arrived.

Minimizing Other Impacts

- ✔ Carry a trash bag on your vehicle and pick up litter left by others.
- ✔ Pack out what you pack in.
- ✔ Practice minimum-impact camping by using established sites and camping 200 feet from water resources and trails.
- ✔ Observe proper sanitary waste disposal or pack your waste out.
- ✔ Take a small bag and pack out your pet's waste especially in front country areas or if it is left on or near trails or trailhead areas.
- ✔ Before and after a trip, wash your gear and support vehicle to reduce the spread of invasive species.
- ✔ Build a trail community. Get to know other types of recreationists that share your favorite trail.