

Camp Establishment and Usage

Camp Site Selection

- Good campsites are found, not made.
- Select established sites, or durable surfaces.
- Pick a location with water, grass/feeding area, and a good containment location.
- Observe camping setbacks from lakes, streams, trails, other campsites, and historic and cultural sites and structures.
- Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas previously impacted.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.
- Do not picket stock in wet meadows.
- Tie stock so they cannot chew on the tree bark or eat the leaves of woody vegetation. A high line between trees is recommended. Use tree saver straps to protect trees.
- Fill in all holes and return all trampled areas to their natural state.

Disposing of Camp, Human and Stock Waste Properly

- Pack out everything you pack in.
- Do not throw left over food into campfires. It won't burn completely and is an attractant to bears and other animals.
- Deposit solid human waste in holes dug at least six inches deep at least one hundred feet from water, camp, and trails (check regulations for distance). Cover and disguise/naturalize the hole when finished.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, use tiny amounts of biodegradable soap.
- Rake or scatter manure when breaking camp, especially around highline.

Minimize Campfire Impacts

- ALWAYS be aware of local fire restrictions.
- Campfires can cause lasting damage-do not have a campfire if you cannot control it.
- Be aware of your surrounding area and make sure you have a safe location for your camp- fire.
- Consider using a lightweight propane stove for cooking to replace or reduce campfires.
- Use established fire rings or use a fire pan.
- Build a mound fire using fire retardant material underneath (old fire shelter).
- Keep fires small - use sticks that can be broken by hand when possible.
- Sawing and splitting logs should be done in a manner that minimizes visual impacts to the other visitors.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash and put out campfires completely. DEAD OUT!

Learn more at [BCHA.org/education](https://www.bcha.org/education)



State or Chapter Contact Information



"Light On The Land" is the Back Country Horsemen of America educational platform of ACTIONS and ETHICS to perpetuate the common- sense use of saddle and pack stock and encourages the wise and sustainable use and enjoyment on our public lands.

The 5 Guidelines of Light on the Land

1. Plan Your Trip
2. Use Trails Responsibly
3. Minimize Camp Impacts
4. Minimize Wildlife Impacts
5. Preserve the Integrity of Wilderness, Front Country and Backcountry

For more info go to:

[BCHA.org/education](https://www.bcha.org/education)

Plan Your Backcountry Trips

Preliminary preparation will provide the means to ensure safety and enhance the experience while minimizing the impact on natural and cultural resources.

- Know the regulations, special concerns, and restrictions for the land resources you are using.
- Communicate with others who have experience in your destination.
- Use print and/or offline maps and study routes before you leave.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use, if possible.
- Plan for emergencies, considering communication, weather, hazards, and medical for both humans and animals.
- Plan and practice stock containment such as hobbles or highlines.
- Take only animals that are fit, calm, and experienced.
- Always use familiar tack and gear.
- Take only equipment you need to reduce the weight.
- Predetermine how you will feed stock – graze, pellets, hay, etc. and don't introduce new feed during the trip.
- Plan your menu.
 - Repackage human food to minimize waste.
 - Utilize bear resistant containers for food.
 - Pack extra light-weight meals in case of losing packs or unexpected delays.
 - Avoid cans, bottles, double packaging on dry goods, etc.



Minimize Wildlife Conflicts

- Observe wildlife from a distance - do not follow or approach.
- Become familiar with animal signs that could indicate which type of animal is in your area – tracks, scat, rubbings, etc.
- Be familiar with proper response when encountering an aggressive/predatory animal in different situations.
- Be prepared for encounters on the trail with dogs, moose, bear, deer, elk, snakes, etc.
- Carry bear spray when necessary and transport in a proper container - bear spray is considered the best deterrent in preventing an attack.
- Never feed wild animals - feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors (habituates), and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing/hanging rations, grain, and trash in approved bear-resistant methods - remember some personal hygiene items may be misinterpreted as food by some animals.

Preserve the Integrity of the Backcountry

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not disturb cultural or historical structures and artifacts.
- Leave natural objects as you find them - check local regulations as removing these items may be illegal.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native plant species and check local weed-free public land requirements.

Trail Usage, Etiquette and Safety

- Know trail designations of planned routes.
- Travel in small groups with the minimum number of animals necessary.
- Concentrate use on existing trails, do not create or utilize social trails.
- Avoid muddy trails if possible.
- Ride or walk single file in the middle of the trail, especially when wet or muddy.
- Do not cut corners or switchbacks.
- In pristine areas, disperse use to prevent the creation of new trails.
- Carry a saw and clear obstacles, especially those over sixteen inches above trail tread.
- Human restroom stops should be done off trail and no signs (trail lilies) should be left.
- Scatter manure at all rest stops.
- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
 - When taking breaks or setting camp, do so away from trails and other visitors.
 - Be courteous. Just because you have the right of way does not mean you should always take the right of way.
- Communicate and cooperate with other users
- Report a negative occurrence if necessary to local officials.

