

ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK



Leave No Trace

Outdoor Skills & Ethics

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Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics
November, 2004

Wildland Ethics

"Ethical and moral questions and how we answer them may determine whether primal scenes will continue to be a source of joy and comfort to future generations. The decisions are ours and we have to search our minds and souls for the right answers..."

"The real significance of wilderness is a cultural matter. It is far more than hunting, fishing, hiking, camping or canoeing; it has to do with the human spirit."

—Sigurd F. Olson

...and so we visit wild places to discover ourselves, to let our spirits run with the graceful canoe and journey through the beckoning forests. The wilderness is good for us. It enables us to discover who we really are, and to explore who we are really meant to be. It is the nature of wild places that gives us the space to slow the pace of our lives, to becalm the storms of everyday life, to gain perspective on the things we truly value.

Sigurd Olson needed wild places...they gave much to him, as they do to us—and, so, we should be eager to give back. Our favorite places—those whose forests have welcomed us, whose lakes have refreshed us, whose sunsets have inspired awe—are not ours alone. They are a treasured resource, there for the good of all who seek their own true spirit through solitude and adventure.

But as we visit wild places, we leave signs of our passing—signs that speak of the need for taking better care of these lands, of recognizing the impacts that we create as we travel and camp, and of the need to develop a collective commitment to practices that aim to minimize the signs of our presence. We must personally develop, and foster among others, a wildland ethic that gives purpose to these practices.

This booklet is part of a national educational program called Leave No Trace. The Leave No Trace program is managed by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, whose mission is to promote responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnership. The principles and practices discussed here are meaningless as a set of rules and regulations. They must be based on an abiding respect for and appreciation of wild places and their inhabitants. They must be applied with a desire to protect wildlands, the places we venture to—seeking to refresh our spirit.

This booklet contains previously copyrighted information (Leave No Trace, Inc./National Outdoor Leadership School, 2001) that has been cooperatively modified by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, Isle Royale National Park and the Isle Royale Institute.

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Outdoor Skills & Ethics

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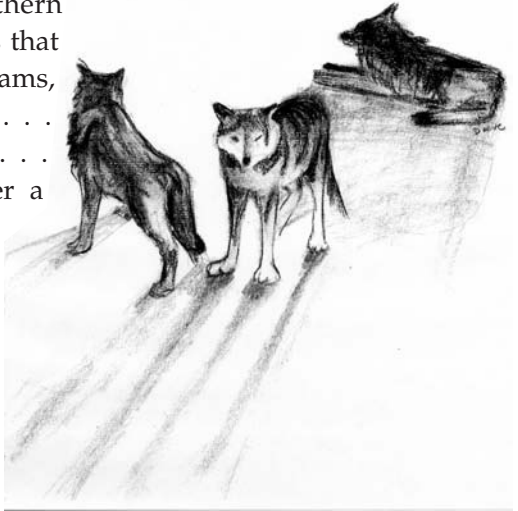
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Isle Royale National Park . . . vast stretches of northern hardwoods and boreal forests that blend into chains of lakes, streams, rocky outcrops and shorelines . . . ever-present Lake Superior . . . the serenity of a sunset over a glassy-calm lake . . . a crisp, fall morning with geese overhead . . . northern lights with loons and wolves calling throughout the night . . . the companionship of hardy souls and the trappings of packs, boots, tents and boats . . . spirits full of adventure and an appreciation for the intangible values that wildlands can instill within us . . .



Isle Royale is legendary in its richness and complexity. It is an area of extensive human history that exerts an ageless draw upon people to seek adventure, renewal, and the exhilaration of outdoor recreation. It is the clear, cold waters, the lush forests, the abundant wildlife, and the quiet of the natural landscapes that etch memories in our minds and instill a desire to return. As these wildlands host more and more visitors, however, our collective mark on the environment and natural ecosystems becomes more apparent—and more damaging. Water pollution, litter, disturbance to vegetation, soil, wildlife and other visitors are indicators of the need to develop universally-held ethics and practices that protect these wild and serene waters and forests, and their inhabitants. This booklet serves as a part of an effort to foster techniques to minimize these impacts, and was written to complement the park's backcountry regulations, which are printed on the back cover of this booklet. It is designed as part of the national Leave No Trace™ education program, and incorporates the following principles:

Principles of Leave No Trace

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors

This booklet is a guide to three-season minimum impact traveling and camping in the waterways and forests of Isle Royale. The principles and practices of the Leave No Trace program apply to all visitors who are traveling and camping in Isle Royale's backcountry including hikers, paddlers, and anglers. Boaters who access the park's interior from its miles of Lake Superior shoreline, or spend time relaxing in its quiet bays and harbors will find that these practices apply equally to their visits. In addition, visitors interested in sea kayaking, fishing, the Lakes Region in general, or other regions and backcountry activities are referred to other booklets in the *Leave No Trace Skills and Ethics* series. For all visitors, the values of wildness, serenity, beauty and adventure should serve as motivation to care for these natural areas. For more information on Leave No Trace or to order materials, please contact the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics 1.800.332.4100 or visit www.LNT.org

Another excellent resource for visitors using motorized craft or vehicles is the **Tread Lightly™** program (www.treadlightly.org), which publishes and distributes a variety of educational materials.

Before traveling to Isle Royale, check with the National Park Service (NPS) for advice, regulations, and current conditions. Isle Royale's Houghton Visitor Center can be contacted year-round at 906-482-0984. Trip planning information is also available through the park's website (www.nps.gov/isro). First and foremost, it is important to carefully review and follow all of the Park's regulations and recommendations, i.e.; group or watercraft size limits, use of designated campsites, inland and Lake Superior fishing regulations, and campfire restrictions. This booklet is intended to support and complement the NPS's management guidelines.

I. Plan Ahead and Prepare



Leave No Trace depends more on attitude and awareness than on rules and regulations. Minimum impact practices must be flexible and tempered by judgment and experience. Techniques are continually evolving and improving. To help ensure the healthy future of North America's wild places, all visitors to the forests, lakes,

parks, trails and waterways must maintain a spirit of cooperative desire to explore and understand our wildlands, and a willingness to challenge themselves by developing new ways to minimize one's impacts upon them.

Assessing personal goals for the trip and clarifying expectations within your group are the first steps in being prepared. The time spent researching, planning a route and informing yourself of the challenges you may encounter, and the skills, supplies and equipment you'll need will help you achieve these goals safely and competently. Proper food, shelter, and clothing will allow for the time and comfort to deal with unexpected poor weather without hastily building a fire, or causing damage to fragile vegetation in inappropriate or inadequate campsites. Having skills to match the demands of your route will go a long way towards ensuring a safe and fulfilling trip, and will allow you to Leave No Trace of your passage.

Be informed.

Whether this is your first visit to Isle Royale, or you're a seasoned veteran, an important and enjoyable first step is gathering knowledge of the park. Consult guidebooks, local land managers, outfitters, or outing clubs about the character and popularity of your intended route and destination. Isle Royale offers a wide spectrum of recreational opportunities. Consider whether the primitive conditions and challenge of the wilderness match the goals of your trip, or if a visit to a less remote and perhaps more accessible area might offer what you seek.

Some initial planning should be done with the NPS; visit our website www.nps.gov/isro or call Isle Royale's information line at 906-482-0984. Available information includes:

- special regulations, closures, stay limits, bans on campfires, alcohol bans, restrictions on generator use for boaters, and quiet/no wake zones.
- permits—required for all commercial groups and overnight boating and camping parties
- daily user fees or annual passes
- advance campsite reservations for parties with 7 or more people
- group size restrictions
- transportation to and from the island, including ferry and seaplane reservations
- designated campsite locations
- fishing regulations, and license requirements
- entry and exit points for your route
- purchasing or properly transporting and storing fuel for boats
- preventing the introduction and spread of non-native species
- emergency procedures
- what to expect
- recommended itineraries based on experience level, equipment, degree of challenge desired or special needs of a party

If solitude is a goal, seek advice on less traveled routes, campsites that are more remote, and times of the week or seasons to consider. Be aware of the need to check-in with Canadian or US authorities if crossing the international border.

Paddlers, hikers, sailors, and motorboaters are all part of the spectrum of backcountry use here, but to afford the best experience for each visitor and to protect the wildland environment, special restrictions are in place defining where each type of activity is allowed. Throughout most of the park, camp and dock at designated campsites, and plan to use outhouses and metal fire rings where they are provided and fires are permitted—all are designed to reduce overall impact to the land. If your backcountry experience will be in areas without these facilities, or perhaps in off-trail or anchoring-out situations, seek the guidance of the Isle Royale staff, make sure that your skills fit the demands you'll encounter, request the proper anchoring-out or cross-country permit, and prepare yourself to practice strict Leave No Trace techniques.

Accept responsibility for your actions.

The decision to visit the backcountry is one that should carry a commitment to be a good steward of the land. Your behavior and interaction with the environment and other visitors, and your efforts to leave things as you find them will ensure that Isle Royale retains its special qualities.

Recognize the cumulative impact that thousands of backcountry visitors each year have. Because you are part of this, make decisions that work to reduce your impact. Get to know the members of your group as part of pre-trip planning. Find out about their backcountry experience and skill levels. Plan an itinerary that meets the needs of the group's least physically fit member. Instill a commitment to low impact practices. This fundamental preparation is basic to good leadership, and alerts you of any need to help others learn what it takes to Leave No Trace.

Poor planning makes safety and comfort your focus, rather than on "leaving no trace." Plan to arrive at your destination each day with time and energy to set up a secure and well thought-out camp, or if necessary, to continue on and find an adequate site. Sudden changes in the weather may make staying warm and dry challenging. Know what to do in a lightning storm, or if lake conditions become too demanding for your skills. Keep safety a priority by informing others of your plans. Know what your options are if someone in your group becomes ill or injured. Stick to your route, be informed of, prepared for, and properly manage the risks you may encounter.

Plan your logistics well.

Time spent preparing and planning for your logistical needs is more than repaid once your trip is underway. Proper food and equipment enhance both your confidence and your competence as a backcountry traveler.

Select and Use Proper Gear. Proper gear leads to comfort, safety, and the ability to greatly reduce the impact of your backcountry visit. Make sure your gear is in good repair and fits your needs. Maps and a compass are essential items. Small campstoves and freestanding tents allow flexibility in selecting campsites and help in camping without causing new, or additional impact. Collapsible water carriers reduce the number of water collection trips. Wear waterproof hiking boots to allow walking through puddles and mud on wet trails, and to avoid widening trail impacts. A small metal garden trowel is indispensable

for managing a fire, and for digging catholes to bury human waste wherever outhouses aren't provided. Headnets, long sleeved shirts and pants provide relief during mosquito and black fly season, allowing visitors to avoid any frantic haste in setting up camp. Proper tie downs and canoe packs will safeguard gear from being lost overboard, or dropped unknowingly on portages. Axes, hatchets, machetes and saws are not appropriate tools for Leave No Trace camping in the backcountry and proper planning makes them unnecessary.

Brightly colored tents, packs and clothing may look attractive but make you very visible to other visitors in the backcountry, thus contributing to a crowded feeling. To minimize your visual impact, bring earth-toned clothes and equipment. There are exceptions to this, however. On large lakes, brightly colored boats may sometimes be important for safety. To increase visibility in an emergency, a few brightly colored items displayed as needed, may be life-saving.

Plan your meals. Food is a highlight of any trip, so spend some time planning nutritious and enjoyable meals. Focus on quantity so you'll have plenty for your needs, but won't be carrying excess. At home, try out a few recipes with the foods you're taking, to assure success at the campsite. Cook only as much as you plan to eat at each meal. Leftover food often ends up as garbage that must be packed out. Never leave excess food in camp kitchens, around fires, or in outhouses.

II. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

In the backcountry the key to reducing impact is in confining activity to surfaces that are durable, or highly resistant to damage. Waterways, trail systems, and designated campsites will most often provide these surfaces. In popular, or already impacted areas, concentrate use to reduce further damage. However, in areas that appear unimpacted, or pristine, it's better to spread use, thus dispersing impacts. Finally, it's important to avoid all places where impact is just beginning to show.

Concentrate use in popular areas.

On Isle Royale, designated campsites and trails help to concentrate impact. Designated campgrounds and trails are well marked on Isle Royale. These areas are in a condition where continued use causes little additional impact to soils and vegetation. Concentrate your activity within these areas to keep from enlarging them, and to protect the

surrounding shoreline and forest from impact. Camping outside of designated campgrounds on Isle Royale requires a special cross-country permit and other regulations apply.

Recognize durable surfaces. Durability refers to a surface's tendency to resist impacts from trampling and camping activity. Examples of durable surfaces are exposed (bare) rock, sand, gravel, snow, leaf and pine litter and of course, water. Much of this glaciated island contains surfaces that are not durable, therefore not resistant.

These include thin, fragile or unstable soils, wet or marshy areas, and moss or lichen-covered rocks. Though most vegetation isn't considered durable, dry grasses and sedges are reasonably resistant to impact because of their hardy root structures and flexible stems and can withstand a limited amount of travel. Avoid damage to stems or branches of underlying plants when walking on thin snowpacks in the spring, and to aquatic vegetation when fishing, paddling in shallow water, and loading or unloading your canoe or kayak.

Stay in your boat when taking a break from paddling, or land at a designated campsite, portage landing, beach, or rock outcrop. At camp, land and store your boat on durable areas of shoreline—sand, gravel or rocky beaches work well—being careful to avoid vegetation or fragile soils. While hiking, or on portage trails, take rest breaks on durable surfaces such as rock, bare ground, or a fallen tree. Rest your pack or canoe on a durable surface as well, in a place where you're out of the way of other visitors. Use care to avoid damage to trees and other vegetation along the trail.

Stay on established hiking trails and paths leading from campsites to outhouses, water sources, and boat landings. Hiking outside of these eventually creates excessively wide, or multiple paths. Wear waterproof boots or shoes that can get wet, gaiters for keeping mud out of your hiking boots, and stay on the trail, walking on exposed rocks or even in the mud. Walking around mud puddles widens trails and worsens mud problems. Don't cut switchbacks—it saves little time and causes gully formation and erosion.

Use designated campsites: On Isle Royale, designated sites are often located relatively close to water. This is to allow access by watercraft, and to allow access to water for drinking and cooking, or



may be because of terrain limitations and thick vegetation inland. To compensate for this, campgrounds have features that mitigate impacts of recreational use such as privies generally located well away from water sources and established tent sites or shelters.

Whenever using designated sites, further reduce impacts by locating tents directly on the flattened tent pads concentrating all your activities such as cooking and hanging drying lines within the designated site, and keeping noise to a minimum. Please do not pitch a tent at a shelter site, as these sites are



not designed with tent pads. When a campground has more parties than campsites please share a campsite with another party rather than setting up camp outside of designated tent pads. Help maintain the life of outhouses and minimize contamination by never throwing trash down outhouse holes.

Some designated campsites also have NPS-provided metal fire rings, where small campfires are permitted, and some have picnic tables. If you find any fire rings other than NPS-provided metal rings it is generally a good idea to clean up and/or dismantle them. If in doubt, record their location and inform a park ranger.

Minimize site alterations. Designated tent pads in Isle Royale campgrounds are designed to be flat, with a slight slope to drain water. Trenching around tents greatly disturbs soil, damages roots, looks unnatural, and is, in fact, illegal. Never scrape away or clean sites of leaves and other organic litter, or harvest plants or moss to pad the ground. These groundcovers help to cushion trampling forces, and to reduce erosion from rainfall and water runoff. If rocks are moved to anchor tents, replace them when you leave. Do not construct lean-to's, tables, chairs or other rudimentary campsite improvements. If these sorts of conveniences are desired, seek out campgrounds with picnic tables and shelters, or carry a lightweight camp chair, use a fire grate as a platform for your camp stove, and check with local outdoor shops for equipment that may suit your needs—without impacting the backcountry.

To avoid enlarging the campsite and to prevent the development of satellite or adjacent use areas, choose a site big enough for your group.

However, only parties of 7-10 with group reservations may use designated group sites. All other campsites are designed to hold up to 6 people with 2-3 tents. Tents, traffic routes and kitchen sites should be confined to existing hardened areas or naturally resistant surfaces. If the campsite you've found is not large enough to accommodate your tent without damaging or removing vegetation, move on and find another site. Pitching a tent outside of the established tent pads can quickly lead to expanding the site since vegetation is easily damaged and slow to recover.

Isle Royale campsites are designed and maintained to provide a suitable camping area while also minimizing negative impacts from recreation. When used properly, designated campsites go a long way towards concentrating and minimizing the impacts within heavily visited areas. Without them, impact would spread into the forests and along the shorelines. Isle Royale staff can tell you what amenities are available at each campground.

Spread use when off-trail.

Because of thick vegetation and abundant wetlands, it is very difficult to travel off-trail on Isle Royale. Isle Royale contains an extensive system of waterways and hiking trails providing a great variety of routes, access to most destinations. For the few seeking these challenging conditions off-trail, special care needs to be taken to reduce impacts. If you do decide to go off-trail, you will need a cross-country permit.

Off-trail areas are seldom visited and show little sign of human use. It is hoped that these areas remain pristine. You can help. If traveling by water, select durable landing and boat storage areas, such as beaches and bare rock. Consider the visual impact of your vessel while you're on shore. In remote areas, this can be a challenge.

Special regulations apply to camping off-trail. These regulations focus on specific Leave-No-Trace guidelines for dispersing impacts to prevent damaging pristine areas, as well as minimizing visual intrusions. Some areas of the park are closed to all



camping to protect particularly vulnerable resources. These closures may vary from year-to-year. These regulations and guidelines will be clearly explained for anyone requesting a cross-country permit. For this reason, camping outside of designated campsites without a cross-country permit is prohibited.

Avoid places where impact is just beginning. If traveling off-trail, avoid places that are already showing impact, such as unofficial trails, or boat landings away from docks and portages. Most vegetation and soils can completely recover from a limited amount of impact. However, there is a threshold where the ability of vegetation to regenerate can't keep pace with the amount of trampling it receives, and where harmful compaction and erosion begin with trampled soils. Isle Royale's northwoods ecosystem is mostly composed of shallow soils and plants with fragile roots; therefore its recovery threshold is lower than many other systems. Once this threshold is passed, the site will rapidly deteriorate, and natural recovery will be more difficult. Trails, boat landings, lunch spots, and cross-country campsites that show evidence of slight use, such as crushed or flattened vegetation, are best left alone to regenerate.

III. Dispose of Waste Properly

Pack it in, Pack it out.

Pack out all of your food waste, trash, and unused fuel. Burning or burying trash or garbage, or dumping it in outhouses is harmful and is prohibited on Isle Royale. Trash and litter have no place in the backcountry. It takes only a simple commitment to pack out all that we pack in, and to encourage others to do the same. In addition, we can show good stewardship by carrying an extra trash bag to help carry out litter that others have left. This is a small burden, and you'll be proud of your efforts.

When preparing for your trip, reduce litter at the source. Eliminate glass bottles, cans and jars except those for personal, non-food items such as medicines, insect repellent and fuel. Repackage food into reusable plastic bags or containers, and remove any excess packaging. Unwrap snack foods at home and bag them in bulk. Small pieces of trash such as batteries, twist-ties, candy wrappers, fishing line and cigarette butts are often left in haste or fall out of pockets and litter the backcountry. Put scraps of trash in a small bag kept handy just for this occasion.

Garbage is leftover food waste. Food scraps, spilled or excess food, orange peels, nutshells, apple cores and the like should be picked up and packed out. If you have leftovers from a meal, either save and eat them later or put them in a plastic bag and pack them out.

Never dispose of trash or garbage in outhouses. When this is done they fill up quickly, and may be torn up by animals searching for food. Misuse of outhouses creates a costly and time-consuming burden for land managers. In addition it results in replacing outhouses at an accelerated cycle, which adds to impacts in the backcountry.

Buried garbage is frequently dug up by animals. Food scraps left in outhouses or fire rings, or food that is buried or scattered about, encourages animals to see humans as sources of food, which bothers campers and changes the animals' natural feeding patterns.

Not long ago, backcountry visitors were advised to burn all of their trash to reduce bulk. This policy has changed because attempts at burning trash or garbage frequently result in fire rings littered with unburned scraps of food, foil, tin cans, glass, plastic and paper, as well as illegal fires. Trash is often lined with noncombustible foils or plastic, and garbage is difficult to burn. The leftover residue is both unsightly and can be scattered by the wind or scavenging animals. Toxins produced from burning plastics and other materials affect the air we breathe. Paper items thoughtfully left for the next campers' fire will probably get scattered, or soaked by rain or dew. Because of the cumulative impacts, Isle Royale National Park prohibits anything but untreated wood found within the park being burned in campfires. Pack out your trash, do not burn it.

Practice good sanitation.

In the backcountry, we create certain waste that is difficult to pack out. This includes human waste and wastewater from cooking and washing, including gray water on boats.

Properly dispose of human waste. Isle Royale is treasured for its clean lakes and streams. We can go a long way towards protecting them by simply being responsible and putting forth the effort to properly dispose of our own human waste.

Proper disposal of human waste helps prevent pollution of water sources, minimizes aesthetic impacts to other visitors, and reduces the spread of illness.

There are four guiding principles behind Leave No Trace sanitation practices described below:

- avoid polluting water sources
- eliminate contact with insects and animals
- maximize decomposition
- minimize the chances of social impacts.

Outhouses: Outhouses are provided at all Isle Royale campgrounds for the disposal of human waste. They are placed in suitable sites adjacent to designated campsites where they play an important role in concentrating the impacts of human waste. Where outhouses are provided it is essential that we use them. High use-levels and thin soils have dictated opting away from practices such as burial in individual catholes. Though very useful in other settings, individually dug catholes around designated campsites would likely result in an intolerable minefield of waste disposal sites. Please use outhouses whenever possible.



Gray water on boats: Head pump-out service is available at Windigo and Rock Harbor when the concession operation is open. Federal regulations prohibit the discharge of any waste, including gray water, into park waters. Remember that Lake Superior provides drinking water not only for many Isle Royale campers, but also for U.S. and Canadian communities on Lake Superior's shores.

Catholes: In backcountry areas away from campgrounds where outhouses are not provided, a cathole is the most widely accepted means of human waste disposal. Burying human feces in soil is the most effective method of reducing aesthetic impacts, and reducing the possible spread of pathogens. In catholes, waste decomposes slowly, so there is a strong need to place them in correct locations.

- Locate catholes well away from lakes, streams, gullies, trails and campsites. Use 200 feet (at least 75 steps) as a good distance for this, but remember that you may need to increase this due to environmental factors such as thin or absent soils.
- Disperse catholes widely. Go for a short walk to find an appropriate site away from camp, or use a remote location during the day's travels.
- Choose a site that other visitors will be unlikely to accidentally discover. It may take some doing to locate a proper one, so plan ahead.

- With a small trowel, dig your cathole six to eight inches deep—deep enough to keep insects and animals away—and four to six inches in diameter. This can be a challenge in soils that are often thin and rocky so, again, plan ahead.
- After use, cover the cathole with the excavated soil and disguise it with natural materials.

When thin, early or late season snowpacks are present and the ground is not frozen, dig through the snow into the soil to make a cathole. Human waste buried only in snow will not decompose until snowmelt, and it's at risk of being carried directly into water sources in the runoff. It is also inappropriate to deposit human waste under rocks. This may inhibit decomposition and the rocks might be overturned by the next curious visitor, causing a huge aesthetic impact.

If members of your group are unable to utilize catholes effectively (for example, groups of young children), it is best to visit an area where outhouses are provided.

Urination: Urine has little direct effect on vegetation or soils. Research indicates that urine poses little threat to human health. However, the odor of urine can create an aesthetic impact, and animals occasionally dig up and damage ground to get the salts deposited from urine. Try to urinate on durable surfaces such as bare rock or a fallen log away from camps and water.

Toilet paper and feminine hygiene products: Use toilet paper sparingly. Where outhouses are provided, deposit toilet paper in them. If catholes must be used, pack toilet paper out in plastic bags (doubled to confine odor). Dispose of it on the mainland at the end of your trip. Improper disposal of used toilet paper in island dumpsters could result in a health hazard to park employees. Burying toilet paper in a deep cathole is an option, though a less desirable one because of its slow rate of decomposition and the possibility that animals will dig it up. Toilet paper should not be burned at the cathole—it rarely burns completely and has been a source of wild fires.

If you are willing, consider using natural alternatives for toilet paper. Popular forms include clean stones, smooth sticks, and leaves. However, use discretion with live vegetation to avoid the possible contact with irritants found in some plants. Obviously some experimentation is necessary to make this practice work for you, but it is worth a try. At the cathole or outhouse, use low lather, biodegradable soap or anti-bacterial lotion, to wash your hands—reducing impact includes keeping yourself and each other healthy.

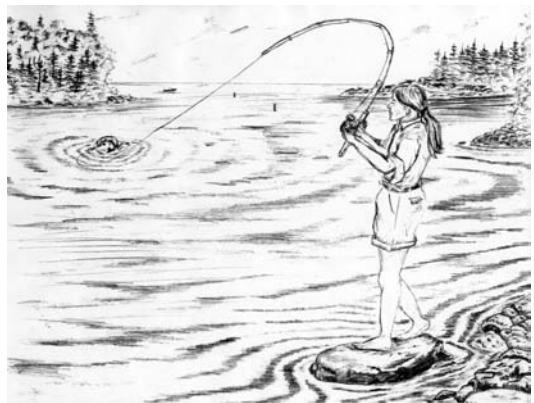
Feminine hygiene products will not break down sufficiently for backcountry disposal and should be double bagged, similarly to toilet paper, and packed out back to the mainland.

Properly dispose of wastewater. Hot water, a little elbow grease, and sand, snow or other natural scrubbers can tackle most backcountry cleaning chores. Soap is unnecessary for most dishwashing jobs and can be difficult to thoroughly rinse off. If soap is used at all, it should be used sparingly. Remove all food bits from the water (a small strainer or piece of screen are essential tools for this), and pack these particles out with garbage and other trash. The gray water can then be scattered, or broadcast over a wide area, away from camps and water sources. Even if you use biodegradable soap, please do not dispose of it in lakes or streams, as it takes a long time to degrade, and in the meantime contaminates the water you and the wildlife depend on.

If bathing, only use soap if necessary and use it sparingly. Get wet, lather up and rinse on land far from water sources (200 feet), with water carried in a collapsible container or pots. It's important to allow all soap or wastewater, even that from biodegradable soaps, to filter through the soil, where the contaminants can be broken down before reaching any body of water. Clothes can be cleaned by a thorough rinsing with plain water. Wash garments away from water sources. .

In most larger lakes, and streams of ample volume, swimming or just taking a dip without any soap is all right, and hasn't been seen to harm the water. However, keep in mind that the water you swim in may be someone's source for drinking. So be respectful, and avoid swimming where you may impact other visitors, disturb wildlife, or impact shorelines or streambeds.

Properly dispose of fish remains. Fish entrails and bones originate as a natural part of the ecosystem. However, if disposed of improperly they can be unsightly and may adversely affect wildlife. The goals in disposing of fish remains are to reduce aesthetic impacts, to avoid encouraging encounters between people and scavenging wildlife, and to prevent unnatural influences on wildlife populations.



Anglers on Isle Royale have three options for properly disposing of fish remains. Though not always practical, but one to consider if just out for the day, is to pack the entrails out, or to take your catch home or to a fish cleaning station in Windigo or Rock Harbor and clean it there. Another option for boaters is to chop remains into small pieces (4 inches or less) and drop them in water at least 50 feet deep. These two methods are best for reducing unsightly remains, odors, and large gatherings of gulls around campgrounds. The least preferable option is to clean fish away from campsites and place remains on shore at least 100 feet away from the campground, between the waterline and vegetation line. Please do not clean fish on docks or picnic tables, do not throw remains in shallow water, near docks or campgrounds, or throw remains to gulls or foxes. After cleaning your catch, scrub and rinse away all blood and slime from any onshore surfaces. Remember that fish remains will draw wildlife (the same wildlife you do not want to find in your campsite).

To help prevent the spread of aquatic, non-native organisms and wildlife diseases, never deposit fish or their remains in a lake or stream different from the one they were caught in. At Isle Royale, do not transfer any live or dead aquatic material (plants, fish, invertebrates) between inland lakes or streams, or from Lake Superior to Isle Royale's inland lakes or streams.

IV. Leave What You Find

Every wildland region has unique features of geography, geology, plants and animals, climate and weather, and a cultural and archaeological story to tell. Getting to know this story of the land—the natural and human history—is one of the major goals that should motivate you. People visit the backcountry of Isle Royale to enjoy it in its natural state. Allow others the sense of discovery by leaving plants, rocks, historic, cultural and archaeological artifacts just as you found them.



Leave natural features undisturbed.

Some backcountry camping practices, once favored and suitable, are no longer necessary or appropriate. Invest in a good tent rather than trying to improvise shelters with materials from the woods. Use sleeping pads, collapsible camp chairs, and plastic groundcloths rather than cutting boughs for a bed. Don't hammer nails into trees, disfigure them with axes and saws, or leave wire or ropes tied around them. Tent lines tied to young trees or branches should be padded to avoid damaging the bark or girdling their trunks.

Picking flowers may seem a harmless act, but the cumulative effect of many people doing so becomes quite damaging. Besides reducing the plant's vigor and seed production, picking flowers changes the way wilderness appears to others who could also enjoy the flowers in their natural settings. At Isle Royale, regulations prohibit the damaging of vegetation; it is best to simply admire flowers and plants where and how you find them, and to take them home in photographs, drawings and memories. Natural objects of beauty or interest such as antlers, feathers, bones, rocks or mineral crystals, should be left alone for others to discover and enjoy. In national parks, it is illegal to remove any natural or cultural objects.

If fishing, plan ahead and bring artificial lures; collecting worms, leeches, catching minnows or other bait in the park or bringing them into the park's streams and inland lakes is prohibited. Only artificial lures are permitted for fishing in the park's inland lakes and streams. Some types of live bait are allowed in the park's Lake Superior waters. Check on current bait restrictions in Lake Superior in your Michigan DNR fishing regulations.

Eliminate introduction of non-native species.

The introduction and spread of invasive non-native species of plants and animals is a significant ecological problem in wildlands. Many exotics, when introduced to an area with conditions favorable to their growth, will out-compete native species, displacing them and leading to large-scale changes in the ecosystem. By being aware of our role as a carrier in the spread of non-native species, and by changing our behavior we can help maintain the ecology of the wildlands we cherish.

Although several invasive, non-native species have been found at Isle Royale, many others known to be a serious concern in the region have not yet become established in the park. This gives us the chance to prevent their introduction, which is much easier than eradicating

established populations and reversing the ecological damage. You are critical in helping with this. Ensuring you do not introduce or spread non-native species is one important way to be sure you leave Isle Royale as you found it.

On Isle Royale, non-native species can be introduced in the form of seeds attached to camping gear. Boaters unknowingly can transport non-native species via water in live wells, the bilge or transom. Even residual water in boats and canoes from the last trip can contain non-natives. Transporting non-natives species from Lake Superior to the park's inland lakes is a critical concern because of the fragile, pristine condition of the inland lakes. In the backcountry, the most prevalent places for non-native plant introduction are areas along hiking and portage trails, lakes and their shorelines, and campsites—the very areas where our use is concentrated. Several plant species are of moderate to severe concern at Isle Royale, including spotted knapweed, garlic mustard, creeping bell flower, and mountain bluet. Primary non-native animals of concern include the zebra mussel, rusty crayfish, Rainbow smelt, spiny waterflea, exotic worms and leeches. All of these species are known to displace native species and alter the food web. Preventing their establishment and spread is critical for protecting Isle Royale's native fish, wildflowers, and complex aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. As visitors to any wildland, we have a responsibility to take what steps we can to prevent the spread of these harmful species.

Before traveling to the park, or moving from Lake Superior to inland lakes, make sure that your canoe or motorboat is empty of water, and scrubbed clean of aquatic organisms, seeds or remnants of plants from your last venture. Never dump Lake Superior water into inland lakes or streams. Empty and clean your packs, tents and other gear to make sure that they aren't harboring seeds before coming to the park. Clean your boot soles of dirt in the tread. Never discard or release live bait like minnows, worms, leeches, crayfish, and frogs. Live bait is prohibited in the park's inland streams and waters. If you are planning to fish in Isle Royale's Lake Superior waters and its inland lakes, change your fishing line before heading for the park's inland waters to prevent the spread of the spiny water flea. Contact any Isle Royale visitor center or ranger station for more detailed information on non-native, aquatic species or request the brochure "Aquatic Invaders: Stop the Spread & Spread the Word."

Help preserve the past.

Archaeological, cultural and historic artifacts preserve an important

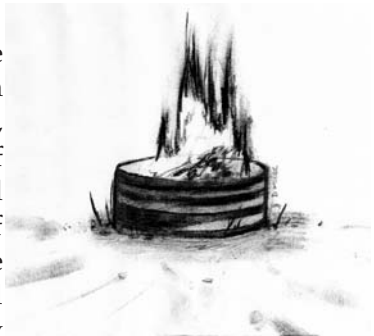
part of our past. Some artifacts and locations are sacred to Native Americans. Others may contain clues to the past days of exploration, or of times when a growing nation sought timber, fish, and copper here. These artifacts and remnants are all part of a whole Isle Royale—and we benefit in the knowledge we gain and the sense of discovery that they provide.

On public lands, these resources are protected by the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, and the National Historic Protection Act of 1966. It is illegal to excavate, disturb or remove any of these resources (logging and mining implements, gravesites, arrowheads, potshards, etc.) These laws formalize an ethic that should be applied to all lands public or private. Disturbing artifacts takes them out of context and removes a chapter from an important story.

V. Minimize Campfire Impacts

Campfires are permitted on Isle Royale in a limited number of campgrounds where metal fire rings are provided. Campfires are frequently an anticipated part of the camping experience. Their use in cooking, for warming, and in creating a social focal point has been passed down through the generations. However, campfire impacts are among the most common and obvious recreational impacts in wildlands.

In heavily-used backcountry areas, the impacts due to campfires are both ecological and aesthetic in nature, stemming from overuse and misuse of fires and local wood supplies. Around designated campsites, the impacts of inappropriate campfires include fire rings littered with trash and garbage, and overflowing with char, or incompletely burned wood. Other damage results from axes and saws: broken-off branches, birch bark peeled from trees, charred soil, vegetation trampled in the search for firewood, mazes of trails leading into the woods, and the forest floor barren of downed wood. Smoke from our fires may lay heavy on a still day and impact those camping nearby.



Even where campfires are allowed, their cumulative impact points out the need for us to rethink their place as essential to the backcountry experience. All backcountry visitors should remember that on Isle

Royale, a campfire is a privilege—it should be viewed as a tool to be used only when appropriate. The decision to have a fire should never be made arbitrarily, but should balance its purpose against its impacts and the ecological and aesthetic condition of the site. Having a fire requires a commitment of time and effort to see the entire process through—from wood gathering to clean-up—in a way that demonstrates concern and responsible judgment, directed towards the well-being of our wildlands.

Consider alternatives.

Fires on Isle Royale are banned in sensitive environments, in areas where the impacts associated with collecting firewood would be damaging, in areas where impacts have been excessive, or during dry spells when the danger of forest fire is high. Wind presents a danger when a campfire is burning. Rain or snow makes starting a fire a challenge, and wet fires need to consume lots of wood to stay lit. Wherever signs of their overuse are present, fires should not be built. Fires are not allowed on off-trail or cross-country trips. Proper planning for the backcountry includes carrying the appropriate equipment for warmth, shelter and light and fuel and a lightweight campstove for all cooking needs.

Use a campstove. Stoves provide many advantages in the backcountry. Modern camping stoves are lightweight and easy to use—rain or shine. With them, cooking is fast and clean. Stoves give flexibility in camp and kitchen selection—availability of wood and a good fire site is not an issue. In designated sites, place your stove on a fire grate to provide a stable platform and to concentrate the activities of cooking to within an already impacted area.

Try alternatives to a fire. Lightweight lanterns, candles, and flashlights all provide excellent light sources for after-dark cooking or reading. A cold meal can provide a refreshing and easy break from the cooking routine. A candle lantern can provide an excellent alternative to a campfire for the evening's get-together. An evening without a fire or other bright light may provide an opportunity to see wildlife and to notice sounds and smells beyond the influence of the firelight and smoke.

Build a low-impact fire.

If you choose to build a fire where they are permitted, do so in a way that will leave no lasting impact on the environment. Do not bring firewood into the park; insects and pathogens can become established

in the park from an infected wood source, and could devastate Isle Royale's forests.

Always use established metal fire rings. At designated sites, you must use the fire rings that are provided, with your fire fully contained within the ring. All NPS-provided fire rings are metal; fire rings constructed of stone, or fires without a ring are illegal. Use the metal fire rings to help concentrate impacts and to keep surrounding areas unharmed. Don't build additional rock fire rings, attempt to move fire grates, or build fires against boulders or ledges. Not only are they prohibited on Isle Royale, but these practices also greatly increase the impacts of campfires by disturbing and damaging soils, roots, vegetation and rock. Before starting a fire, clean out any unburned trash that others might have left, and pack it out.

Use small pieces of dead and downed wood. Campfires should only be built if there is abundant dead and downed wood gathered from the ground away from camp. You should not need an axe or saw; small, easily broken wood is best for a suitable fire. Collect wood during the day, walk a few minutes into the forest, or paddle or walk down the shoreline well away from camp and walk into the woods. Gather firewood a few pieces at a time from a large area, to avoid depleting any one place in the forest or on the shore. Small pieces of driftwood are okay. Do not take wood from beaver dams or lodges. Use small-diameter wood no larger than an adult's wrist, as this will burn completely—a goal for any low impact fire. Never break branches or strip bark from standing trees, live or dead. When using birch bark for fire starter, "shop-around" for a source that's already dead and downed. Peeling bark from a live tree will harm and could kill the tree. Stubs, scars, trees without branches, shorelines devoid of driftwood, and the forest floor picked clean of dead wood are impacts we can easily avoid.

Keep fires small. Keep your fire small and purposeful. Massive fires are of little use other than as a spectacle. They are too hot to manage, much less cook on, and too wasteful of the excess wood that they consume. Break firewood into useable lengths as needed, as the fire is burning. Wood should be burned down to ash or very small coals so as to eliminate char. Once finished, make sure the flames are out and the coals are cold to the touch, and clean the fire up before leaving camp. If there is any unused wood, scatter it in the forest to decompose naturally, and to avoid a pile of firewood being left over.

Keep safety as well as impact in mind with any campfire. Consider the factors of wind, overhead branches, dry leaves and surrounding vegetation. Always attend your fire and keep proper tools, such as a

metal shovel and water, at hand. Double check that it is out cold before going to bed or leaving camp.

VI. Respect Wildlife

The presence of wildlife is one of the certain pleasures we enjoy in the backcountry. Indeed, the call of a loon and the howl of a wolf are defining characteristics of Isle Royale. Any visitor surely feels richer for having memories of moose foraging in a foggy pond, an osprey fishing in a lake, or a river otter playfully searching along a stream. Whether traveling by boat or foot it is imperative that we keep the animal residents of these wildlands in mind. While we may certainly enjoy them, it is our collective responsibility to respect the lives, habitat, and needs of these creatures, and to travel and camp in a fashion that will not impact them in any way.



Enjoy wildlife at a distance.

The survival of any animal, and ultimately any species, depends upon its success navigating the constant challenges and threats of the world in which it lives. Our presence and actions present yet another challenge to wildlife. Make it your goal to enjoy wildlife, but to do so in a fashion that does not stress or pose a threat to it. The best way to do this is to keep your distance. Never approach or follow wild animals, or block their lines of travel or escape. Never pick up any wild animal. Purposely herding animals into a better setting for a photo, throwing objects, teasing, making noise or mimicking calls to change their behavior are things that cause them undue stress. If any animal that you are observing shows that it is aware of your presence, act disturbed, begins to flee, acts aggressively or defensively, or approaches you, then you are too close. Be prepared to enjoy wildlife at an unobtrusive distance by carrying binoculars, spotting scopes and telephoto camera lenses to observe or take photographs.

Never feed wildlife. Many species of wildlife are adept opportunists. When offered the temptations of an untidy backcountry kitchen, or a handout from an admiring camper, they may eventually overcome their natural wariness of humans. They become attracted to

people as an unnatural source of food. Once this occurs, aggressive or destructive behavior may follow as the animal becomes conditioned in conflicts with humans. Animals ultimately lose in these situations. When fed, animals may become less wary of hazardous locales such as campsites, trailheads, paths, and docks. They may also congregate in unnatural numbers, increasing stress and spread of disease within their populations. Feeding wildlife prevents them from eating the natural foods needed for adequate nutrition. It also leads to disease and the ingestion of wrappers, cans, and bottle caps—all of which may prove fatal.

On Isle Royale be particularly aware of "camp foxes", which have been known to steal boots, pots, and anything else left unattended in addition to food. Never intentionally or unintentionally tempt foxes with these treasures, regardless of how cute or photogenic the fox may be. It is in the best interest of the fox for long-term health and survival.

The solution is simple. The creation of nuisance animals that may be harmed or harm people is our doing: Keep wildlife wild by not feeding them.

Minimize noise. Traveling quietly, and in small groups, helps give wildlife the space they need to feel secure. Keep yourself and members of your party aware of the impacts that noise creates. By reducing noise you'll disturb the wildlife less, and likely see more of it.

Avoid sensitive habitat.

Localized areas where animals feed, access water, raise young, or seek shelter can all be considered sensitive. Practice your skills at recognizing signs of wildlife such as animal trails, tracks, rubbings, scat, bird nests, bedding or denning areas. In general, wildlife do not like surprises. Resist the temptation to investigate a bird nest, or to approach a denning site to get a better look. As visitors to wildlands we must respect their sensitive habitat by staying on established travel ways and camping at designated sites.

Be aware of sensitive wildlife species. Two species of particular concern at Isle Royale are the Common Loon, and the Bald Eagle. Both are particularly sensitive to disturbance, especially during their nesting season. Loons generally nest on islands or in sheltered bays, where they're afforded a measure of protection, but not from humans. Wakes from motorboats can flood or destroy nests. Paddlers creeping too close can disrupt loon behavior, causing nest abandonment and exposure of eggs or chicks to predators or harmful weather conditions. Disturbance

by recreational visitors may contribute to a decline in the number of chicks. For this reason managers ask that visitors keep **at least** 150 feet—an estimated adequate distance—away from islands, and the regulations of some areas prohibit landing on them from ice-off until July 21 (the loon’s nesting season). Because loons and their nests are not easy to detect, as a general practice assume that islands are sensitive habitat—likely nesting areas—and avoid them whenever possible. And if you do see a loon on shore, move away.

A few areas on Isle Royale are closed or trails are rerouted for a portion of the season to protect eagle nests, loon nests, or other sensitive sites. Please respect these closures and report any violations you see to a park ranger. Temporary closures that are respected have proven effective, with young eagles and loons being raised in areas where nest failure would otherwise seem a certainty. Once the closures are lifted visitors then have the opportunity to watch loons and eagles rearing their successfully hatched young.

As a general rule, when you see an animal with its young, do not approach it. Animals are extremely protective of their young and encounters with humans are very stressful to the parents and may be a safety risk to you.

Be aware of seasonal stresses on wildlife. Mating seasons are stressful times for animals, when large amounts of energy are spent pursuing and defending mates and territories. During nesting and rearing seasons animals focus primarily on feeding and protecting young and guarding nests. Animals—such as moose—can become unusually aggressive toward people in the fall. Be especially vigilant to avoid animals during these times—for their sake as well as your own. Animals in the late summer and fall are busy readying themselves for the upcoming winter, which on Isle Royale can be severe. The wildlife found here meets the stresses of winter in many ways—migrating, hibernating, storing food or altering behavior to enhance its chances of survival. Fall is a critical time for building up fat stores for animals that remain through the winter, as well as those gearing up for a long migration. In early spring, animals are vulnerable because they have depleted their energy stores and must wait for the growing season to replenish themselves. Spring is a time of birthing and rearing, sensitive times for all species.

Store food securely.

A secure camp is a sign of a seasoned traveler. Storing food properly, keeping a clean camp, and preventing animals from obtaining any

human food is the goal of Leave No Trace. Although there are no bears on Isle Royale, several other animals have become adept at stealing food and gear—especially foxes.



Keep a clean camp. An otherwise

adequate campsite, littered with trash and food, encourages the enlargement of the site, the spread of impact to pristine spots, and visitation by wild animals. Securely store food and equipment so it won't be scattered by wind or damaged by marauding critters. When you leave your site, leave it clean. Then, other visitors will use it, but wildlife won't.

Store food so it's unavailable and uninviting: Good options for food storage are well-packaged food to eliminate odors and prevent spills, and all food packed tightly into a pack, kayak, or in a shelter. Check with the visitor center for specific requirements for food storage in the campgrounds on your itinerary. Isle Royale's foxes, squirrels, gray jays and gulls are particularly ingenious at stealing food and stealing or damaging camping paraphernalia.

- Items to be stored include dry, packaged or fresh food, garbage, tobacco, toothpaste, and scented or flavored toiletries or miscellaneous items. Used toilet paper and feminine hygiene products should be stored as well.
- Leftovers, or any foods with a strong scent, should be sealed in doubled plastic bags or hard plastic containers to reduce odors.

If unsure of how to go about storing food, check with Isle Royale to get advice or literature on how to proceed. The goal is to keep wildlife from detecting and accessing food. Even then you should be aware that animals are clever, agile and persistent, sometimes finding ways to get food despite our best efforts.

VII. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Our backcountry experiences are shaped by both environmental and social factors. We work to avoid impacting the environment so that it

stays healthy and makes our experience richer. Our experience will also be enhanced if we strive to lessen the social impacts of wildland recreation.

Meeting and accommodating other visitors, sometimes frequently, is a reality in many of our wildlands these days. Although Isle Royale appears to be one of the least-visited national parks, its backcountry, on a per acre basis, receives one of the heaviest uses in the National Park Service. In light of this fact, we all need to consider the needs and motivations of other visitors as well as our own. Isle Royale's backcountry is a valued resource that must be shared.

Understand the condition of wildlands.

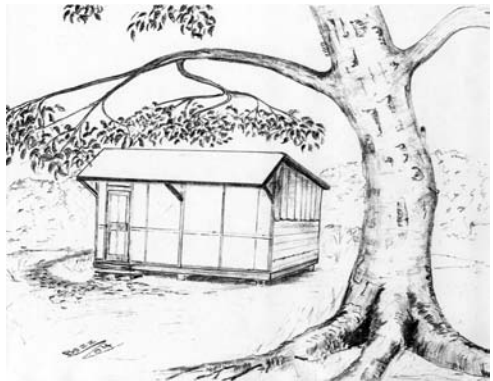
When we choose to recreate in wildlands, or natural areas, we acknowledge the value of land free of human influence. We seek natural ecosystems, where we can experience and observe wildlife and intact natural processes. We embrace a primitive existence, where we'll have opportunity to apply our backcountry skills, and experience adventure and solitude in a setting very much unlike our environments at home. We've commonly come to call lands that possess these attributes wilderness.

As visitors to Isle Royale, we all seek a form of wilderness. We enjoy the area because it offers us so much that is unlike our automated, complex lives at home. By purposely leaving conveniences and development behind, we open ourselves to the beauty and authenticity of this wild place. So, too, we must develop a respect for the land, wildlife, and other visitors.

Respect the goals of other visitors.

Motivations for a backcountry trip are unique to each person. For some, the desired experience is to enjoy peace and solitude. For others, completing an ambitious route is the goal. Still others enjoy the camaraderie and adventure which can be found along the waterways and forest trails.

If you travel through the waters and woodlands of Isle Royale with a conscious etiquette—quiet, respectful, eager to learn and discover,



willing to work hard to maintain its values—not only will your own experience be enhanced, but so will that of others you may meet along the way.

Avoid conflicts. Being friendly and outgoing toward other backcountry visitors is a good policy. Be prepared to share campgrounds with other hikers, paddlers, or motorboaters. However, remember that each person seeks their own balance between solitude and levels of social interaction. On the water, while waiting around portage landings and docks, and on the trails and around campsites, share news of the day's events with others, and enjoy the camaraderie fostered by a lee shoreline on a windy day, but remember to be respectful of people's desire for privacy and solitude. When portaging or docking, wait on the water to avoid congesting already-occupied landing areas. If loading or unloading, move along smartly so that others can be quickly on their way as well. Remember that on Isle Royale hikers and portagers share some trails, and paddlers, backpackers, and motorboaters share some campgrounds. Avoid conflict by being aware of others as you travel, and by making a conscious effort to allow them their own experience.

Contact staff at Isle Royale to get a clear idea of exactly what type of travel or use is allowed where and how busy the park is during different times of the season, so you have realistic expectations, and can plan for the type of experience you desire. Be informed, tolerant, and understanding of the various modes of travel—hiking, canoes, motorized boats—or activities—camping, fishing, sailing, diving, private and guided trips—allowed in the park. Visit the backcountry with a cooperative spirit.

Minimize crowding. Consider the area you intend to visit, when you'll go, and your route in an effort to find out how many other visitors you're likely to encounter. If solitude is a goal, you can often find it by exploring less well known, or less easily accessed areas, or by going during less popular periods.

Some of the most direct impacts seen in wildlands are those created by large, undispersed and loosely-organized groups. Noise, visibility, and the imposing feeling imparted by a large group can be reduced through supervision and planning. If you are a group leader, carefully consider the area you will visit, your route, the timing of your trip, and your group's conduct. Accept responsibility for facilitating and practicing good camping etiquette. Be aware that size limits have been set for groups and campsite reservations are required for parties with more than 6 people. Contact Isle Royale for more information.

Let nature's sounds prevail. Sound travels easily across water and on the trail. Become aware of the noises we make that we become desensitized to: banging canoes, slamming shelter doors, noisy conversations over a loud stove, shouting to a partner on the trail or to other boats. Keep a check on excessive noise and understand the effect that it has on wildlife, or other visitors seeking quiet and solitude. Quiet hours throughout the park are between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., when visitors should take extra care to make no noise.

Portable radios and cd players disturb other visitors and wildlife. At Isle Royale, cd players and radios tuned to commercial stations are prohibited outside of developed areas and the open waters of the Lake Superior. Technological conveniences such as cellular phones, GPS devices, bright lights or lanterns. impact the integrity of the wilderness experience for many people. Try not using these devices in the wilderness in order to get the full effect of this unique experience. If you must use such items, do so unobtrusively and consider whether they contribute to the backcountry experience you are seeking, or instead cause you to miss elements of it.

Isle Royale's Pet Policy

Pets are not permitted on Isle Royale. Trained service or guide dogs are allowed to assist physically challenged visitors. Contact Isle Royale to find out all of the pre-trip requirements and special permits necessary for service or guide dogs.

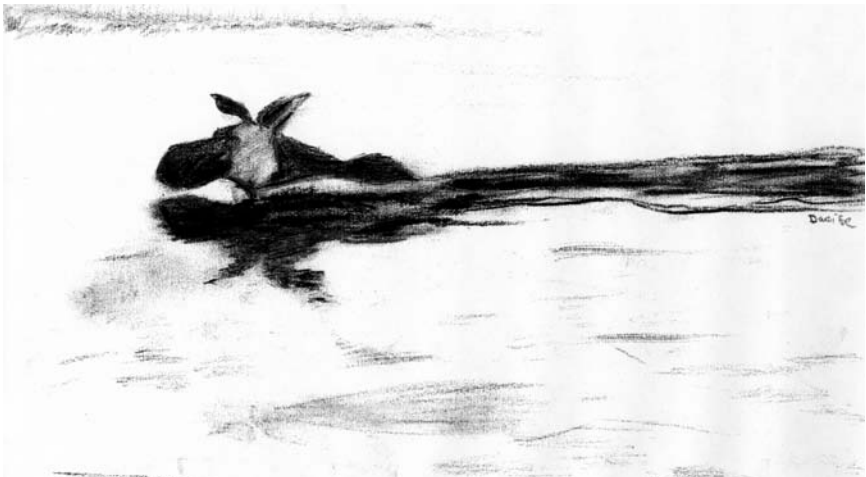
A Challenge: To Leave No Trace

We need wild places. We need to know about them, to experience them and understand the rhythms they follow. We need to contemplate our place within these wild lands, to discern what it is that draws us there. We need to carry with us an ethic that recognizes the value of wild places and acknowledges our responsibility to treat them with respect, and apply good judgment as we visit and travel in those places. We need to care for wild places as if they were our homes; in many ways, they are. We need to act, for ourselves and as examples for others, in a way that "leaves no trace" of our passing, not only in designated wilderness, but whenever we visit natural places. To do this is good for us, it's good for those who will surely follow, and it's good for the wild places, wherever they may be found.

Contact Isle Royale and other land management agencies and groups in your area and see how you can help. Be active in the planning and management of areas that are important to you. Volunteer for trail maintenance, habitat restoration efforts, and public education programs, or organize them for your local area. Get involved and let your opinions on land use be known. Support wildlands and sustainable recreation.

Information on obtaining Leave No Trace curriculum materials, courses, and training is available by calling 800-332-4100 or visiting the extensive Leave No Trace website: www.LNT.org.

Special thanks go to the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics and the Isle Royale Institute for partnering with Isle Royale National Park to make this brochure possible. Additional thanks go to Buzz Brown and Dieter Weise for hand-drawn illustrations.



Backcountry Camping and Boating Regulations for Isle Royale National Park:

1. Fires are permitted only in designated grills and metal rings, as indicated on your permit. Use only dead and down wood.
2. Carry out all of your trash and litter, including cigarette butts and foil. Burying trash, or discarding trash or litter into pit toilets, is prohibited.
3. In campgrounds, tents must be pitched in designated sites only. Tents are prohibited at shelter sites.
4. Cross-country camping is permitted only if pre-registered with a park ranger for the zone and date on the permit. Special rules apply.
5. Never feed wildlife. Keep a clean camp. Keep wildlife away from food and garbage and vice-versa.
6. Keep all soap—even biodegradable soap—out of lakes and streams. Do all washing and bathing at least 100' away from water's edge.
7. Where there is no fish cleaning station, cut remains into small pieces and dispose in deep water (>50 ft depth) or on shorelines at least 100 feet from campgrounds. Leave them on shore above water and below vegetation where gulls can scavenge.
8. Dogs, cats, and other domestic mammals are prohibited on the lands and waters of Isle Royale National Park.
9. Quiet hours are between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Eastern Time. During this time generators are prohibited. Special rules apply in Quiet/No Wake Zones.
10. Fishing on inland lakes, artificial lures only. On Lake Superior, Michigan fishing license required.
11. Streams and creeks are open for fishing from the last Saturday in April through Labor Day. Special rules apply for brook trout – amended in 2005.
12. Possession of fish filets is prohibited, unless filets are being prepared for immediate consumption.
13. Groups (7-10 people) must have advanced camping registration and follow the itinerary specified on the permit.
14. Commercial groups must obtain an Incidental Business Permit issued by Isle Royale National Park. Special deadlines for applications apply.
15. Removing, disturbing, or possessing living or dead wildlife or parts of them (such as antlers), or plants, is prohibited. Disturbance of any cultural or archaeological resources is prohibited. Collecting and removing mineral resources such as agates, datolite or greenstones, including those in Lake Superior, is prohibited.

Leave No Trace

Outdoor Skills & Ethics



“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

—Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac