

# Wilderness Ethics & Backcountry Information

Shasta-Trinity National Forest



*Our wilderness areas are becoming more important to us as refuges from the pressures of every day life. They offer great opportunities for “getting away from it all,” and for testing ourselves, physically, against a rugged and isolated terrain. They are places where the natural scheme of things come first. As more people discover the wonders of the wilderness, however, pressure increases on these fragile areas and it becomes very important that every user practice “no trace camping.” We want everyone to share in a true wilderness experience...*

- 1. Prepare well...** Know about your route and the area. Be sure to have a map and compass. Take adequate food. Bring clothing and equipment that will keep you warm, dry and comfortable. Try and select footwear appropriate for comfort, safety and the terrain. Know the basics of first aid and navigation. Know what to do in cases of frostbite, hypothermia or avalanche danger.
- 2. At the trailhead...** Don't leave any food or deodorant or chapstick in your vehicle. If you have eaten in your vehicle recently be sure and air it out. Bears have broken into several vehicles at various trailheads looking for these things.
- 3. Trekking into the wilderness...** Please suppress the desire to shortcut trails. Doing so creates a scar on the hillside which causes soil erosion. Avoid traveling through meadows and wet areas.
- 4. Meeting stock on the trail...** When you meet stock on the trail, politely move off the trail on the downhill side and stand still until the animals pass by. Offer a courteous greeting and conversation, this can reduce the chance of the stock being scared by you and will allow the stock to relax.
- 5. Camping...** Select a campsite that has adequate water runoff, and use plastic under your tent to stay dry without digging a ditch. Stick to established campsites and try and select a shelter site that has already been used in order to eliminate further expansion of the camp. Bears are present in the wilderness so hang your food well away from camp.
- 6. Garbage...** Carry out all of your garbage and burn only paper. DO NOT bury your garbage! Animals will dig it up and scatter it. Please pick up litter as you encounter it. If you can carry it in full you can certainly carry it out empty.
- 7. Sanitation...** Choose a spot at least 200 feet away from trails, water sources and campsites. Dig a cat hole six inches deep, make your deposit and cover it with the soil that you removed.
- 8. Washing...** Try a soapless cleanup for all but the toughest dirt. Be sure to use biodegradable soap. For health reasons wash dishes with hot water when possible. Do all washing at least 200 feet away from any water source. Even biodegradable soaps must be kept out of lakes and streams.
- 9. Water pollution...** Giardia is present in most areas. You will need to boil, chemically treat or filter all drinking water.
- 10. Smoking...** Smoke only where it is safe, around a fire or in a cleared area. Please carry out all of your cigarette filters.
- 11. Fires...** Fires are OK in some areas but in heavy use areas and especially at higher elevations, fire wood is scarce. In those places it is more important to leave woody material on the ground where it can decompose naturally and add nutrients back into the topsoil where it belongs. When you find yourself in these situations, why not enjoy a fireless evening? Use a backpacking stove for cooking and boiling water... not only is it faster, but it is also more efficient. If you must have a fire, please use a site with an existing fire ring. Or, if you must build a ring please dismantle it and scatter the stones and ashes before you leave. Keep your fires small and use only dead and down material. Make sure the fire is completely out before leaving. Do not attempt to burn plastics and aluminum foil in your fire. Aluminum foil does not burn and plastics release clouds of noxious fumes. Be considerate of those who may use the site later and who may not want to look at your burned trash.
- 12. Impacts on other users...** Most wilderness users are there for the primary purpose of getting away from people and the crowds. The last thing they want to hear is a radio or loud celebrations. Speak softly and save the rowdy games, campfire songs and boom boxes for another time when it is more appropriate. Please blend your camp and tents into the environment when possible so that the visual impact of your presence is minimized. Leave your hatchets at home. You really don't need them in

*(Impacts on other users continued...)*

the wilderness and too many people are tempted to hack on green trees and downed logs when they're bored. Leave the nails at home also. There are plenty of limbs to hang things on. Don't leave your ropes and twine hanging in trees around camp... it is very unsightly. Exercise a little caution when selecting a limb from which to hang your food and you shouldn't have any trouble with the rope tangling and getting stuck.

**13. Mountain bikes...** Mountain bikes are NOT allowed in wilderness areas... no matter what you might have been told. If you plan on entering one of our wilderness areas leave the bikes at home. Please respect backpackers and horsepackers rights to a machine free environment. With the popularity of mountain bikes for single track use there have been several incidents between mountain bikers and horsemen that have resulted in injury.

**14. Group size...** Maximum group size is currently 10. Small groups stand a better chance of achieving a wonderful wilderness experience. Impacts to camping sites are less and the noise level is less. Keep your group as small as possible and work with each individual to keep their overall impact on the environment and other users at a minimum. Group size restrictions may change in the future.

**15. Dogs in the wilderness...** Dogs are allowed in the wilderness with one exception and that is on Mt. Shasta. Dogs are NOT allowed in the Mt. Shasta Wilderness. Please observe some common courtesies however: Your dogs must be under control at all times. Strange as it may seem, some people are very afraid of dogs and a loose dog can terrify them. It doesn't matter that you "know" that your dog is perfectly friendly and harmless... someone walking up the trail who has an innate fear of dogs thinks otherwise. Dogs also tend to keep wildlife away and if you want to see wildlife, taking a dog along is not a good idea.

**16. Wilderness permits...** Wilderness permits are required for the Mt. Shasta and Trinity Alps Wilderness Areas. Permits are not required for the other wilderness areas on the Shasta-Trinity National Forests.

#### **A note about solitude...**

People enter the wilderness for a variety of reasons... some for the sheer physical challenge, some for a social experience with friends and family, some for nothing more than the fishing. Quite a few people make the journey for the solitude that these areas offer... areas of respite from the world outside, a place to disconnect from the influences of life in urban environments. It is important to keep in mind that not everyone may share your particular approach to wilderness living. Solitude is an intangible benefit to being surrounded by wilderness and conditions that foster the feeling of solitude are highly valued by most wilderness users. Please respect the rights of all people who pass through these wilderness areas to an environment free of noise pollution. Screaming and hollering from the mountain tops, or as you emerge from the frigid depths of a cold lake can be quite upsetting to other wilderness users in the area.

#### **For more information about the Wilderness Areas on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest please contact...**

Supervisor's Office  
2400 Washington Ave.  
Redding, CA 96001  
(530) 244-2978 (voice)  
(530) 242-2237 (TDD)

Big Bar Ranger Station  
Star Route 1, Box 10  
Big Bar, CA 96010  
(530) 623-6106 (voice)  
(530) 623-6129 (TDD)

Shasta Lake Ranger Station  
14225 Holiday Drive  
Redding, CA 96003  
(530) 275-1589 (voice)

McCloud Ranger Station  
P.O. Box 1620  
McCloud, CA 96057  
(530) 964-2184 (voice)  
(530) 964-2692 (TDD)

Hayfork Ranger Station  
P.O. Box 159  
Hayfork, CA 96041  
(530) 628-5227 (voice)  
(530) 628-5222 (TDD)

Yolla Bolla Ranger Station  
2555 State Highway 36  
Platina, CA 96076  
(530) 352-4211 (voice)  
(530) 352-4212 (TDD)

Mt. Shasta Ranger Station  
204 West Alma  
Mt. Shasta, CA 96067  
(530) 926-4511 (voice)  
(530) 926-4512 (TDD)

Weaverville Ranger Station  
P.O. Box 1190  
Weaverville, CA 96093  
(530) 623-2121 (voice)

Visit our Forest Website:  
[www.fs.fed.us/r5/shastatrinity](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/shastatrinity)

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