

Trail Talk Calendar: June 2024

Topic: Leave No Trace Principle 7 - Be Considerate Of Others

This month the conservation committee would like to promote the importance of respecting our fellow hikers while recreating in the outdoors. We are asking Worcester Chapter activity leaders to promote this topic and to incorporate it into your pre-activity trail talk.



This is the seventh of the seven principles of “Leave No Trace,” and is valuable in reminding us to be considerate of the other people we share our outdoor spaces with.

Here is some information to discuss with your group:

1.) Being mindful of others in the outdoors

- Remember you are not alone in the outdoors. Other people are utilizing the same public spaces for recreational enjoyment.
- Every person’s relationship with the outdoors is unique. Some people are there to socialize, meditate, watch wildlife, or to just find peace from their everyday lives.
- We must commit ourselves to welcoming diversity and allowing everyone to feel safe while in the outdoors.
- We want everyone to feel included, represented, and have equal rights to access outdoors in order to foster a personal connection with nature.
- **Do not** make excessive noise while recreating on public lands and be mindful of noise pollution.
- Refrain from having loud phone calls, blasting music, or yelling to your fellow hikers.
- Noise can greatly disturb the outdoor experience for other people who are also visiting the public land.
- Loud and excessive noises can interrupt the natural cycle of the local ecosystem and scare away any wildlife that may be in the area.
- In areas such as campgrounds, be mindful of camping guidelines regarding quiet hours in the early morning or late evening.

2.) Sharing the trail

- It's important to practice proper hiking etiquette while utilizing public trail systems.
- Just as one obeys traffic laws, we must adhere to a universal trail usage understanding
- Be sure to **yield to others** while on the trail. We must understand which trail user has the “right of way.”
 - If you are a mountain bike rider you must always yield to hikers, runners, and equestrians.
 - Everyone must yield to anyone who is using assistive mobility devices.

- Hikers traveling uphill always have the “right of way.” The reason for this is because while hiking uphill users generally have a more limited view.
- When hiking in a group make sure to travel in single file. **Do not** take up the entire trail width with your group.
- Single hikers should step aside to let groups pass by. Always let faster hikers pass by when possible.
- Keep the trail traffic moving and don't block the “fast lane.”
- When passing others on the trail, always communicate with a friendly gesture and indicate your intentions to let others pass.
- Mountain bikers should call out their positions when quickly traveling down slopes or around blind corners.
- Equestrians have the right of way over hikers and bikers. Give them as wide of a path as you possibly can.
- Avoid making any sudden movements or loud noises while equestrians are passing by. Be subtle in your tone and demeanor to avoid startling the horse.

3.) Being a responsible pet owner

Bringing your dog on the trail can be lots of fun, but it also means you have an extra responsibility, both to the natural environment, as well as to those who are also using the trails. Be sure you understand the proper etiquette before bringing your furry friend on the trail.

- Hike with your pet when it's least busy. This will help reduce the impact on the trail.
- Make sure pets are allowed on the trail you are planning to hike before you head out. Some trails are off limits to pets for various reasons, whether to protect a fragile ecosystem or wildlife habitat.
- Pick up and pack out your dog's waste. You may think it won't matter in the great outdoors, but there are millions of pet dogs in the U.S., and the amount of pet waste on trails adds up.
- Unlike the waste of other animals, pet waste contains parasites, bacteria, and other diseases, and is considered an environmental pollutant and health hazard.
- If you don't want to carry your pet's waste, there are several products on the market that let you have your dog carry the waste.
- Keep your dog on a leash! Everyone thinks their dog is an angel, but other people or dogs on the trail may have a different experience. Make sure to keep your dog leashed wherever it's required.

References

[Principle 7: Be Considerate Of Others - Leave No Trace \(Int.org\)](https://www.internationalhiking.org/7-principles-of-leaving-no-trace/)

[The 7 Leave No Trace Principles & How to Follow Them \(greatmindsthinkhike.com\)](https://www.greatmindsthinkhike.com/7-principles-of-leaving-no-trace/)