

Nature Etiquette

“take only photographs, leave only footprints”

Leave No Trace

<http://www.lnt.org/> & <http://www.blm.gov/education/lnt/principles.html>

When you go out into nature keep these things in mind to prevent the degradation of the physical and biological environment.

1. **Pack it in, pack it out.** Take everything you need with you to your destination AND make sure it all comes back home with you. Don't litter!
2. **Observe and follow all signs** (e.g. private property, stay on trail, keep out, stay out of creek).
3. **Try not to disturb the animal or plant life.** Don't be too loud. Remind students not to pick at, pick up, or kick (e.g. fallen pine cones) vegetation or animals as they walk along.
4. **Leave what you find.** In many cases, it is illegal to remove rocks, shells, arrowheads, plants, animals, etc. from a location unless you have the proper permit. Know the rules in your area.
5. **Leave what finds you!** Make sure you don't have any hitchhikers, so that you don't spread unwanted organisms (i.e. non-native or invasive organisms). This can be difficult, but it is helpful to know what non-native or invasive organisms are in your area, so you have an idea of what kind of precautions you should take. Some general guidelines to get rid of hitchhikers:
 - brush off your clothing and your hair, try to get all seeds off of you,
 - if you've been in the water, rinse off your shoes and clothing as best you can,
 - try not to track mud, dirt, etc. on your person or in/on your equipment.

In some cases, non-native or invasive organisms are so small that they cannot be seen with the naked eye and sometimes to see them, you need a microscope! SO, the best way to avoid the spread of aquatic non-native organisms is to avoid going to multiple water bodies in one day AND make sure all equipment is completely dry between trips. Certain non-native species may require special decontamination procedures to prevent their spread, so it's best to know what you are potentially dealing with in your specific area(s).

Some (potentially confusing) vocabulary:

- **pest, nuisance** - often used interchangeably to describe an organism or species, native or non-native, which usually has some negative economic, recreational, or other kind of impact.
- **non-native, nonindigenous, alien** - often used interchangeably to describe an organism or species that has reached an area outside its species' natural geographic area, often through human transport.
- **introduced** describes a species that has been transported by humans across a geographic barrier.
- **established & naturalized** - often used in similar ways, referring to a species that has been introduced and the population has become self-perpetuating, but has not spread from the point of introduction.
- **invasive** - used in various ways: an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health (official U.S. definition provided in Executive Order 13112 signed by President William Clinton on February 3, 1999) OR a species that has been introduced by humans, established, and is spreading from the area of introduction.