



Outdoor NC Statewide Stewardship and Recovery Initiative

There is no other state like North Carolina—322 miles of ocean shoreline, vast mountain landscapes, hundreds of waterfalls, 41 State Parks, and 14 National Park Service units, there are endless opportunities for recreation and adventure. These treasured outdoor resources are the infrastructure of our states thriving travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries, and contribute, in part, to the 51 million visitors traveling here every year—and that number is growing. With that growth comes the need to promote responsible stewardship of our natural assets to support and strengthen the state's tourism and outdoor recreation economies.

Visit NC and the North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Industry Office have entered a partnership with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics to develop a comprehensive stewardship initiative. This initiative will work to balance promotion and stewardship of our state's public lands by educating and empowering residents, visitors, and partners across the state. The Leave No Trace program is the most widely recognized and accepted stewardship education program on public lands in the United States and provides a proactive method for minimizing recreation-related impacts. Working with alliance of partners across the state, this initiative will ensure that we safeguard resident and visitor outdoor experiences, while preserving North Carolina's natural assets for future generation.

Programming established through the partnership will:

- Produce effective and actionable North Carolina-tailored Leave No Trace messaging, including messaging that helps drive resident and visitor behaviors in a safe and responsible way over the next year coinciding with Visit NC's recovery campaign.
- Provide reliable, science-based, and easily understandable stewardship information and education to North Carolina residents, visitors, tourism members, outdoor industry partners, and other stakeholders.
- Increase resident and visitor desire to care for North Carolina's lands and waters. The result is an ethic that embodies the idea that we are all in this together, and we each play a role in protecting outdoor resources in North Carolina.
- Reduce the negative impacts to North Carolina's outdoor resources resulting from outdoor recreation, leisure, and increased visitor numbers.

Program will include:

- Cohesive, statewide stewardship messaging to live on VisitNC.com and other promotional channels.
- Shared messaging, video, and educational resources available to all partners.
- Itineraries created to showcase travel destinations, including less visited and off-peak destinations. All curated by local outdoor athletes and industry ambassadors, inviting visitors to their favorite places.
- Promotion and training at Visit NC 365, the Outdoor Economy Conference, and partner trainings around the state, year-round.



Outdoor NC Leave No Trace Principles - <https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>

1. **Plan Ahead and Prepare:** Be Prepared and learn about the area you plan to visit. Remember food, water, and the right clothes to protect you from cold, heat, or rain.
2. **Stick to Trails and Overnight Right:** Walk and ride on designated trails to protect trailside plants. Camp only on existing or designated campsites to avoid damaging vegetation.
3. **Trash Your Trash and Pick Up Poop:** Pack it in. Pack it out. Put litter – even crumbs, peels, and cores – in garbage bags and carry it home.
4. **Leave It as You Find It:** Leave plants, rocks, and historical items as you find them so others can enjoy them.
5. **Be Careful with Fire:** Use a stove for cooking. If you want a fire, make sure it is permitted in the area you are visiting and, keep it small.
6. **Keep Wildlife Wild:** Observe wildlife from a distance and never approach, feed, or follow them.
7. **Share Our Trails and Manage Pets:** Be considerate when passing other visitor on the trail and Keep your pet under control to protect it, other visitors, and wildlife.

Recreate Responsibly Principles for Healthy Travel - <https://www.recreateresponsibly.org/>

1. **Know Before You Go:** Check the status of the place you want to visit. If it is closed, don't go. If it's crowded, have a plan B.
2. **Plan Ahead:** Prepare for facilities to be closed, pack lunch and bring essentials like hand sanitizer and a face covering.
3. **Stay Close to Home:** This is not the time to travel long distances to recreate. Most places are only open for day use.
4. **Practice Physical Distancing:** Adventure only with your immediate household. Be prepared to cover your nose and mouth and give others space. If you are sick, stay home.
5. **Play It Safe:** Slow down and choose lower-risk activities to reduce your risk of injury. Search and rescue operations and health care resources are both strained.
6. **Leave No Trace:** Respect public lands and communities. Take *all* your garbage out with you.
7. **Build and Inclusive Outdoors:** Be an active part of making the outdoors safe and welcoming for all identities and abilities.

For more information, or to find out how you can partner, contact:

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