



**LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLES**  
**Camping with horses & mules**  
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IN THE BACK COUNTRY HILLS, THE CHARACTER OF US ALL COMES OUT.

It is important to remember that LNT principles are guidelines, not rules. Consider your surroundings, local regulations, weather concerns, and your skill level when choosing the best way to Leave No Trace. Anything we do is better than nothing.

**PLANNING** – The most critical component of a safe and successful trip.

- Contact local land managers for maps, regulations and opportunities for the area. Get information and rules concerning permits, campfires, party size, grazing, weed-seed-free feed, trail conditions and closures, etc.
- Make alternate plans in case of bad weather.
- Select appropriate equipment for the worst conditions the country and time of year might offer.
- Pack lightly. Take only as much gear, as you need for the trip.
- Obtain maps of the area and know how to use them and your compass.
- Condition yourself and your stock for the trip.
- Know your stock and get horses used to highlines, pickets, hobbles, nosebags, feed bags, etc.
- Check on bears in area, especially grizzlies. Be sure you obtain and understand special safety and food storage regulations.
- If certified weed-seed-free feed is required, get horses used to new feed and feed weed-seed-free exclusively a minimum of 2 days before leaving on your trip.
- Think about communications in the event of an emergency as your cell phone may not work.

**PACKING:** Techniques

- Use lightweight, compact camp equipment. Backpacking equipment reduces weight and size allowing you to use fewer animals.

- Unless hunting, consider colors that might blend with surroundings.
- Safe drinking water is a necessity. Water filters and a collapsible water container work well.
- Repackage food into lightweight, non-breakable containers and bags to decrease the amount of refuse brought into wildlands.

**CAMP AND TRAVEL:** Minimize your impact.

- Utilize durable ground when camping and containing stock. The best surfaces are sand, dry grass, and pine needles. Rocky areas work well for the stock.
- In popular areas, concentrate use in established campsites. Keep tents, kitchen area, and traffic in “hardened” areas that are already bare from previous use.
- In remote areas, spread use out over a large area to avoid creating paths and bare ground.
- Avoid places where impact is just beginning. This allows those sites to regenerate.
- Choose a tent site where drainage will not be a problem, avoiding the need to use a trench.
- Locate camp, if possible, a minimum of 200 feet from the nearest water, trail, or other camps.
- Confine stock at least 200 feet from streams, lakeshores, trails, and camping areas.
- Use a highline (with tree savers) and hobbles while on highline to restrain stock and prevent pawing and trampling of tree roots and surrounding ground.
- Take your insect repellent and a first-aid kit for yourself and your stock. (Pestered horses don’t stand still).
- If supplemental grain is brought for stock, use a nosebag to feed allowing a full ration to be eaten without waste.
- Never tie stock to trees for more than about 20 minutes (during short rest stops, unloading gear, etc.) and hobble horses if they don’t stand still.
- Lead horses to water where stream banks won’t cave in.
- If campfires are allowed, use existing fire rings or build a mound fire with a fire pan, or use a fire blanket.
- Use only dead and already-downed wood for fires in smaller pieces since it burns hot and easily turns to ash.
- A camp stove for cooking reduces impact on the land.
- Avoid damaging live trees and plants.
- Carry out all trash so it will not be left half-burned or dug up by animals.
- Dig six-inch “cat holes” for human waste at least 200 feet from camp and water sources.
- Strain or separate food particles from cooking water, scatter the gray water 200 feet from water sources and camp.
- Use biodegradable soap and dispose of waste well back from water sources.
- Protect saddles, bridles, and other tack from salt-seeking wildlife.

- Travel in small groups and ride single file.
- In bear country, hang all food grains, and toiletries 10 feet off the ground and at least 4 feet out from the tree, or use bear resistant containers.
- Stay on trails and avoid shortcuts (especially don't cut switchbacks) that can cause erosion.
- If riding where there is no trails spread out and don't follow the rider ahead to avoid creating paths.
- To avoid detours, repair and clear the trail if needed.
- Don't run horses on trails, for safety and impact.
- Watch wildlife from a distance and try not to disturb.
- When breaking camp, return the site to its natural state as much as possible.
- Scatter horse manure or carry out in horse trailer depending on your campsite location.
- Check campsites as you leave to be sure that nothing is left.
- REMEMBER IN IDAHO, THESE ARE GUIDELINES NOT RULES.
- HAVE A GOOD AND SAFE TRIP!!