

Hiking Etiquette

Be respectful of the land and other hikers.

Almost every group of people has some unwritten rules to help govern their activity and make things more pleasant for all those participating. Rules such as not cutting in line at a ski lift and keeping your elbows off the table when eating at Mom's house are just two examples.

Hikers are no different. Following a few unwritten rules can help make your hike and the hike for others more pleasant. Among some commonly observed practices, are:

- Hike quietly. Speak in low voices and turn your cell phone down, if not off. Enjoy the sounds of nature and let others do the same.
- If taking a break, move off the trail a ways to allow others to pass by unobstructed.
- Don't toss your trash – not even biodegradable items such as banana peels. It is not good for animals to eat non-native foods and who wants to look at your old banana peel while it ever-so-slowly decomposes? If you packed it in, pack it back out.
- Hikers going downhill yield to those hiking uphill.
- When bringing a pet on a hike, be sure to keep it on a leash and under control. Don't forget to pack out pet waste as well.
- Don't feed the wildlife. While many animals stay hidden, others are not so shy. Giving these creatures food only disrupts their natural foraging habits.
- Leave what you find. The only souvenirs a hiker should come home with are photographs and happy memories. (And maybe an improved fitness level!)
- When relieving yourself outdoors, be sure to do so 200 feet away from the trail and any water sources. Follow *Leave No Trace* principles.
- Walk *through* the mud or puddle and not around it, unless you can do so without going off the trail. Widening a trail by going around puddles, etc. is bad for trail sustainability. Just because it looks easy to cut the corner off of a switchback doesn't mean it's a good idea. Help preserve the trail by staying *on* the trail.
- If hiking in a group, don't take up the whole width of the trail; allow others to pass.

