

# The Seven Leave No Trace Principals

*(And how they may be applied to your visit to the Hocking Hills Region)*



**1. Plan Ahead and Prepare**—Visit the Park or Preserve website before arriving to learn about regulations and considerations for the location. When you arrive, you should always check the Kiosk (Information signs) to learn of any changes or activity that may be occurring during your visit. (i.e.. trail maintenance, burn bans, trail closures etc....)



**2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces**—Trail markers, painted blazes and manmade structures, like bridges, are designed to protect flora and fauna (that means plants and animals). Every time we step off trail, we impact plant and animal life. Some of the most important organisms are too small for us to see. Staying on trail protects them. When hundreds of people do this, it is devastating to the area.



**3. Leave What You Find**—Sure, picking a pretty flower for someone you love seems like a sweet idea, but once it is picked, it is gone and others cannot enjoy it the way you did. Cool rocks, nuts, and animal sign, like feathers and bones, tell a story to the visitor. Use a camera, cell phone, or a journal if you enjoy drawing or writing, to document your favorite things. They can make great personal gifts out of your photo/picture documentation. This way the next person can enjoy it too.



**4. Dispose of Waste Properly**—Carry out what you carry in! Even if it is compostable, leaving behind food items may draw in wildlife, creating unsafe encounters between humans and animals. If your dog poops, carry it out! If there is no trash can **OR** if the trashcan is overflowing, take it with you and dispose of it at home or where you are staying. Nothing ruins our beautiful outdoors more than trash and dog poop/dog poop bags left on the trail.



**5. Respect Wildlife**—Who doesn't love to see a deer, rabbit, birds, even snakes and frogs when they are exploring the outdoors!? Keep a safe distance from wildlife and pack out all human food to protect humans and animals. Use binoculars to get a better view, and take a moment to just sit quietly to really take in the natural world around you.



**6. Be Considerate of Others**—It is easy to get excited and use “outdoor” voices when you are in nature. But remember that public spaces are for everyone. Use “indoor” voices so others in the park can enjoy the sounds of nature too. Be polite and yield to other visitors. Think about your actions and how they are affecting the experience of other visitors.



**7. Minimize Campfire Impacts**—The idea of a campfire on a trip in the outdoors conjures up the image of songs with friends and a hot beverage. First, make sure campfires are allowed in the area. Second, check local burning laws and regulations (yes, Ohio has burn laws). Keep fires small using only sticks from the ground. A true outdoorsman does not cut on a tree or chop down a tree for a campfire.