

Outdoor Club Environmental Impact Ideas

Concept: Erase Trace Camping

Enjoying the out of doors is something that I encourage all people to do, but in their participation with nature, humans have left their mark on the natural environment. Hiking trails and campsites frequented by trippers are often mistreated. An obvious solution is the practice of No Trace Camping: people removing any evidence of their presence and leaving the natural environment in the state in which they found it. Unfortunately, not everyone adheres to this principle, and sites are often found covered in garbage and marks of previous visitors. For this reason, No Trace Camping is often not enough. A possible solution would require people to abandon the common notion of, "I didn't make the mess so I shouldn't have to clean it up," and would call for accountability on behalf of human visitors everywhere in nature. Erase Trace Camping would encourage people to not only to clean up after themselves, but also to remove traces of previous travellers when enjoying the outdoors. Erase Trace Camping can be made easy with the packing of extra garbage bags and rubber gloves to take along on any outdoor excursion. It would also require only a few words to participating trippers encouraging the environmentally-friendly practice in hopes of inspiring people to take part.

Trip Checklist:

(Many of these things are likely common practice of the Outdoor Club, but reminders never hurt)

Are we car pooling or taking public transportation whenever possible?

Are we sticking to designated trails?

Are we using designated or previously used campsites to decrease impact on terrain?

Are we camped at least 200 feet from a water source to avoid contamination problems?

Are the soap/washing products we are using biodegradable?

(Water and a scouring pad can often be effective enough for cleaning)

Are we taking necessary measures to dispose of human waste properly?

(Recommended hole 6-8 inches deep and at least 200 feet from water)

(Quick dissolving toilet paper?)

Are we avoiding the use of products like Styrofoam and aluminium foil?

Are we ensuring that people brush their teeth away from waterways?

Are fires in safe locations, of a small size and appropriately put out?

(Scattering cold ashes over a large area is also appropriate)

Are we packing out everything that we packed in?

(Reusable containers obviously help and can be used to hold waste when empty)

Are we taking only pictures and leaving only footprints?

(Lame saying maybe, but good concept none the less)