

ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS TRAMPING

“GOING GREEN DOESN'T START WITH DOING GREEN ACTS — IT STARTS WITH A SHIFT IN CONSCIOUSNESS. THIS SHIFT ALLOWS YOU TO RECOGNIZE THAT WITH EVERY CHOICE YOU MAKE, YOU ARE VOTING EITHER FOR OR AGAINST THE KIND OF WORLD YOU WISH TO SEE¹.”

THIS IS A LIVING DOCUMENT – THE AIM IS A RESOURCE FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS CLUB ACTIVITIES.

If you've got something to add, if something's not correct, or if you have any suggestions to improve please:

- Post a comment or
- Email: environment@wtmc.org.nz.

We hope to update this periodically (how often depends on feedback) – and maybe evolve it into a booklet or info guide for the club.

¹ Source: [Ian Somerhalder](#)

A tramp of a thousand trees starts with a single step...

STRUCTURE AND HOW TO USE:

There's lots of pointers and resources, and some questions. The information is structured around various things to consider:

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Skip to one of interest, read them all, whatever works for you. It's all about **choices** – and not just on the trip – but also before and after.

If it all seems too hard, start just changing one thing. If that works, then change another, if it doesn't, try something else. Get (& share) ideas from other people or sources, have fun. It's your environment.

TRANSPORT

- Consider your destination. Can you combine trips? Go somewhere more local?
- Car pooling, club van, public transport?
- Emissions calculators, eg:

<https://calculators.enviro-mark.com/public?calculator=travel>

GEAR – BEFORE YOU BUY

What to think about before (and when) buy gear:

Reuse, repair, and (only if all else fails) recycle: Before buying new gear, see if you can borrow, repair, adapt, or reuse. The club has various gear you can borrow, including for members, for non-club trips for a small fee.

Contact gear@wtmc.org.nz.

Product life/ durability & use: How much will you use it? Fit for purpose? Can one product be used for more than one thing (can you buy less)? How long will you have it for?

Life cycle stages of a product: Materials; packaging; manufacturing & assembly; transport and distribution; use and service; and end of life.

“Lenses” of impact: Land use, water, waste, biodiversity, toxins (people and environment), and energy use/greenhouse gas emissions.

Prioritise environmental / social considerations over cost: try to avoid kit manufactured in places with a poor environmental and employment track record.

Prioritise local: transportation matters: Prioritise durability over weight: To a point.

The Ultra-Light moniker magically kills two birds with one stone: I am getting a product that is guaranteed to need a replacement soon, and at the same time I am charged a premium for the privilege. ..., it has steadily conditioned us into accepting that equipment is for a season rather than for life.

Prioritise small, local business over enterprise: Market pressures mean that large corporations often operate on the status quo, ethos. Small manufacturers can be easier to keep accountable.

“The most environmentally, sustainable jacket is the one that’s already in your closet...If you need to purchase a new jacket, the best one is the one that is durable, repairable and multi-functional.”
(Lisa Williams, Patagonia’s Chief Product Officer)

Source materials / interesting reads:-

https://www.ukclimbing.com/articles/features/how_green_is_your_gear_not_very-10567

<https://mpora.com/outdoors/environment/green-jacket-quest-eco-friendly-outdoor-clothing/>

<https://www.treehugger.com/htgg/how-to-go-green-outdoor-sports.html>

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PACKAGING

Cut down on packaging:

- Buy in bulk and repackage
- Make and package your own (food & toiletries)
- Club Recipe Book & Dehydrator
- Reuse packaging
- Avoid / minimise use of pre-packaged meals, single use products
- Avoid / minimise use of over-packaged items
- Fully use up & recycle gas canisters
- Avoid non-biodegradable packaging
- Dispose of responsibly

'An energy bar is just a wastefully packaged handful of oats.'

The club recipe book has some fantastic alternatives to pre-packaged muesli bars (and pre-prepared meals)

[WTMC Recipe Book](#)

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WATER – IF THIS WAS YOUR DRINKING WATER?

- Don't wash dishes in streams or lakes.
- Drain cooking and washing water in the soil well away from waterways.
- Soap, detergents and sunscreens are pollutants
- Use only biodegradable and unscented products.
- Dispose of soapy dishwater at least 60m from any water source. Pour on dirt not plants or lichen covered rocks.
- Choose where to - and where not to - swim. (Would you swim in your own drinking water?)
- When swimming, swim downstream of where you collect water

SUN AND SUNSCREENS

- Sunscreen is only one part of sun protection.
- Think also about sunglasses, hats and long-sleeved tops when you know you're going to be outside in the sun.
- Wash off sunscreen and other products before entering water
- Choose your sunscreen wisely - from both a health and environmental perspective. Not all are the same.

[Sunscreens, while vital for protecting our skin from UV radiation, contain compounds that are not necessarily innocuous for the environment](#)

HYGIENE

- Avoid or minimise disposable and overpackaged products
- Refill small / travel-size bottles
- Soaps, sanitisers, toothpaste, etc - Unscented and biodegradable
- Whatever you use will likely end up in the ecosystem you use.
- Consider making your own (eg. deodorants, toothpaste, detergents)
- Avoid aerosols - while no longer having CFCs, they are still a major environmental problem. Plus they're heavy!
- Dispose of whatever you take in responsibly.

Antibacterial soaps contain additives that plain soap doesn't. Some of the antibacterial additives placed in these products include the chemicals triclocarban (TCC) and triclosan (TCS) ... TCC and TCS are dangerous because of their inability to degrade easily

FEMININE HYGIENE

Don't throw sanitary pads or tampons into toilets or fires

Look at more environmentally friendly menstrual options

Menstrual cups, eg. <https://wacollective.org.nz/>

<http://mamacloth.co.nz/menstrual-cups>

More info: [Feminine hygiene in the backcountry](#)

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TOILETING

- Use DOC or other provided toilets where available.
- Don't throw your rubbish into toilets. If you don't want to carry it out, don't take it in.
- If there is no fixed toilet - bury human waste in a shallow hole at least 60 metres away from waterways.
- Waste should be buried at a 'cat's scratch' depth for the optimum decomposition.
- Toilet paper –
 - There is nothing as ugly as a pathway scattered with toilet paper. It doesn't decompose quickly and attracts pests.
 - If that's too hard, think about what paper you use and where you leave it.
- Alpine environments – many things are unlikely to decompose in your lifetime or longer.
- Solid waste bags / poo pots – responsible way to manage your waste.
Nb. DOC has poo pots for sale.

More info: [Disposing of human waste where no toilets are provided](#)

ORGANIC WASTE – DON'T BE A TOSSER

"If you take it in, take it out."

- [I want to bury / throw away my apple cores, banana skins or sandwich crusts - they're biodegradable, right?](#)
- They're not only ugly but may attract pests (e.g. rats, stouts, possums, sandflies, ants).
- Even in the ideal composting environment, organic matter can take months or longer to break down.
- In some natural environments, things may take years or decades (or longer) to breakdown.
- It also introduces chemicals (and possible diseases) into the soil, water system and ecosystem not part of the natural environment.

[John Muir staff members were dressing up as bananas to ask people to take their litter of Ben Nevis.](#)

FOOD CHOICES

- Greenhouse gas emissions?
- Confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs)?
 - Eg. pesticide contamination, and soil, air and water pollution
- Plants, meat, seafood, dairy, etc
- Sustainable? Endangered?
- Local & seasonal

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- Chemicals (pesticides, antibiotics)
- Processed vs raw
- Grow & make your own

[Avoiding meat and dairy is 'single biggest way' to reduce your impact on Earth](#)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

COFFEE CUPS

- How many disposable cups are used on the average club trip?
- Can you use your tramping mug and/ or take a reusable cup instead?

BATTERIES

- Go for rechargeable where possible
- Recycle at the Sustainability Trust (or give to Maj-Britt to give to them)

DON'T TAKE SOUVENIRS.

- "Leave nature in nature".

"CHECK, CLEAN, DRY"

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

- If you see rubbish, pick it up

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LEAVE NO TRACE

1. Plan ahead and prepare

Plan ahead by considering your goals and those of your group. Know before you go – get local information, skills and gear you need to make your trip a success.

2. Travel and camp on durable ground

Some areas are more fragile than others. Choose to camp and travel on the most durable surface you can, the best ones are tracks, gravel, snow and most grasses. Impacts on fragile natural features caused by travel and camping can take many years to heal.

3. Dispose of waste properly

Pack it in, pack it out. As users of the outdoors we all have a responsibility to clean up after ourselves. Rubbish and toilet waste are unsightly and can introduce unwanted organisms into the environment. Lead by example – if you see rubbish, pick it up.

4. Leave what you find

People visit natural areas for many reasons; such as exploring nature's mysteries and surprises. When we leave natural objects and artefacts as we found them, we pass the gift of discovery on to those who follow. Many sites of spiritual and cultural significance to Māori are interwoven with the natural environment.

5. Minimise the effects of fire

Local regulations and conditions change depending on time of year and location. Lightweight stoves, fire pans and mounds mean campfires are no longer essential for cooking or comfort. Wildfires are often caused by carelessness and the natural appearance of many recreation sites has been damaged by campfires, visual scarring and stripping vegetation for firewood. Where fires are permitted, keep them small and make sure it's out by dousing with water and checking the ashes.

6. Respect wildlife and farm animals

Know when animals are particularly vulnerable, such as breeding times, and change your behaviour with them by observing from a distance. Avoid feeding animals either deliberately or accidentally by leaving food or rubbish lying around. Farming is a big part of New Zealand's culture and economy, know how to move through farms without disturbing farm animals.

7. Be considerate of others

We all go into the outdoors for different reasons, so we must share. Think about others, respect their activities and what they might be trying to get out of their recreational experience.

Source: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-before-you-go/care-codes/leave-no-trace/>

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DOCS' ACTIVITY MINIMAL IMPACT CODES

Each of the below are on DOCS' website at:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-before-you-go/care-codes/activity-minimal-impact-codes/>

- Abseiling care code
- Camping care code
- Caving care code
- Climbing care code
- Disposing of human waste where no toilets are provided
- Dog walking care code
- Feminine hygiene in the backcountry
- Four wheel drive care code
- Gold fossicking care code
- Horse riding care code
- Kayaking/canoeing care code
- Motor boating care code
- Mountain bikers code
- Photography care code
- Rafting care code
- Sand boarding care code
- Snorkelling and diving care
- Trail biking care code

FEEDBACK

- Any suggestions to add to, improve, correct, etc greatly welcomed!
- Post a comment
- Email: environment@wtmc.org.nz
- Have a chat to me at a club night or on a trip

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