



Temagami Area

Camping Ethics for Backcountry Travel

Temagami is known for rugged scenery and abundant waterways. As more people travel in the Wilderness and Waterway parks or on Crown land, it becomes increasingly important to help protect our backcountry. Our presence can result in negative impacts on vegetation, wildlife, water quality and on other travellers. By using sound wilderness skills and a “leave no trace” ethic, you can have a safe, enjoyable trip while preserving Temagami for future generations.

Planning

Research your trip so that you are familiar with the route and with provincial regulations. Overnight camping permits are required in Temagami area provincial parks. Keep your party size to 9 or fewer people. Many campsites cannot accommodate larger numbers without serious damage. Small groups travel more quietly, with less disturbance for other users. Prepare carefully, bringing proper equipment for the water and weather conditions you will encounter. Bring maps, a compass and a first aid kit, and know how to use them! Leave an itinerary with a responsible person so that, if you are overdue, searchers will know where to start looking.

Proper food planning can make your trip more enjoyable and reduces the potential for litter to be left behind. Avoid cans and glass containers. Your pack will be lighter, and you won't have to worry about breakage. Repackage food in plastic bags and containers, leaving excess packaging at home where it can be recycled. When preparing your menu, add enough food for one or two extra days in case you are delayed by weather or an emergency.

Travelling

Use only existing trails and portages. Avoid widening trails by walking single file in the middle of the trail, even if it is wet or muddy. Skirting around these areas only makes the problem worse. Do not block portages, access points or launch ramps with boats, canoes or equipment. On lakes where boat traffic is encountered, canoeists should stay close to shore, enabling boats to navigate safely around them. Remember—“rules of the road” apply on waterways too—do not block channels.

Your Campsite

Use only existing campsites. Set up your tents only in areas previously cleared. Think of how your use may cause damage to vegetation, soil compaction or erosion. Do not dig trenches around your tent. Do not deface trees with axe marks, nails, or by building “camp furniture”. Note that in the five backcountry provincial parks, your maximum group size per campsite is 9 people.

Campfires

Use a lightweight camp stove to reduce fire hazards and to save firewood. If a fire is necessary, keep it small and use existing fire pits. It will be easier to control and uses less wood. Use only dead wood for your campfire, preferably collected away from your campsite.

Let your fire burn down to ashes. Drown your fire thoroughly with water. Stir the ashes and add more water. Remove any bits of unburned garbage and pack them out. ***Do not build a fire if it is windy, or if a Fire Restriction is in effect. Fire Restrictions may be declared during times of extremely high fire hazard, making it illegal to have a fire for any purpose, including cooking.***

Smoking

Sit down to smoke, being careful with burning ashes or embers. Extinguish butts and pack them out.

Sanitation and Waste Disposal

Treat all drinking water to prevent contracting *Giardia* or other waterborne parasites and diseases. Use a water filter, iodine, or boil water for at least five minutes. Prevent water contamination by using a dishpan for all washing and rinsing—both for your dishes and yourself. Use only biodegradable soap, and dump waste water at least 50 metres away from water bodies.

Human waste scattered on trails and campsites is a major concern in the Temagami area. Use properly installed privies, located at least 50 metres from open water, campsites and trails. If no privy is available, dig a small hole 10 to 15 cm deep in the active soil layer, following the 50-metre rule above. Use single-ply toilet paper and bury everything completely. Since they do not decompose readily, all other sanitary products should be triple-bagged in plastic and packed out with your garbage. Please ensure all members in your group are aware of proper toilet and sanitation practices.

Practice the “pack it in, pack it out” philosophy. Burn all paper, and carry out everything else in a bag. With proper planning and repackaging of food, you should have a minimum of garbage to begin with. Do not bury your garbage—wildlife will just dig it up when you leave! The same goes for leftover food.

Anglers—do not dispose of fish remains in the water. Leave out on rocks in open areas, where birds can scavenge them. Do this well away from campsites and trails to prevent attracting bears.

Help Keep the Wildlife Wild

Avoid disturbing wildlife, especially young animals or nesting birds. Do not feed wildlife since this interferes with their natural habits. To keep your food and garbage secure from raccoons and black bears, pack it securely and hang your pack between trees, at least 6 metres above the ground. Do not bring food or snacks into your tent!

Do not pick edible wild foods, since wildlife depends on them to nurture their young and to build up reserves for the cold winter ahead. Do not remove plants, historical artifacts or other natural objects.

Follow all fishing regulations. Hunters, follow all hunting regulations on Crown land and other restrictions within parks. If travelling with pets, keep them under control to prevent them from harassing wildlife or bothering other campers. Dispose of their waste as you would your own.

Before You Leave...

Take a last check before leaving your campsite or lunch spot. Is that fire completely out? Have you packed **all** garbage, including twist ties, cigarette butts, or aluminum foil left in the fire pit? Is there any equipment left, such as clotheslines? Help clean up other’s mistakes—pack out anything left behind.

Individual responsibility is important. Each person travelling in Temagami’s backcountry can play a part in its stewardship. Help protect this wonderful landscape for a return visit and for future generations!

For More Information

Temagami Canoe Routes—Planning Map, MNR publication #5934. Map shows canoe routes, campsites and brief descriptions of 23 routes (available from Finlayson Point Provincial Park for \$5.00 plus tax).

Minimum Impact Camping—A Basic Guide by Curt Schatz and Dan Seemon, Adventure Publications Inc., Cambridge, MN, 1994.

Soft Paths—How to Enjoy the Wilderness Without Harming It by Bruce Hampton and David Cole, National Outdoor Leadership School, Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, PA, 1988. Revised 1995.

Canoeing, Kayaking & Hiking Temagami by Hap Wilson, Boston Mills Press, Erin ON, 2004

For more information about provincial parks in the Temagami area, contact Ontario Parks at:

Finlayson Point Provincial Park
Box 38 Temagami, ON P0H 2H0
(705) 569-3205 Fax (705) 569-2886

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