

## Sonoma County Leave No Trace Seven Principles

Sonoma County is one of California's most naturally diverse destinations. With over 60 regional and county parks there are opportunities for everything from hiking, cycling, camping, paddling and more. No matter what activity you decide to partake in, remember to practice the Sonoma County Leave No Trace Seven Principles. Together, we can protect and preserve this special place for generations to come.



### Know Before You Go

- Learn about the areas you plan to visit. Check the conditions ahead of time, as they can change frequently due to weather, temperature swings and drought.
- Be prepared for crowds and potential closures. Parking lots at popular parks and trailheads fill early on weekends and holidays. Arrive early in the morning or later in the day for the best chance of finding parking. Have a "Plan B" destination in mind if the parking lot is full.
- River and ocean safety is key. Always wear a life jacket and do not push yourself past your experience level. Before heading to the river, check conditions at the river park you plan to visit. If visiting the coast, check ocean-use policies and learn about riptides and sleeper waves.

### Stick to Trails and Be Water Wise

- Walk, ride and photograph on designated trails. Designated trails are built to prevent erosion and protect vegetation from being trampled.
- Heed warning signs and be careful taking photos near coastal cliffs. While the backdrop can be enticing, the rocks and shale formations are unstable.
- Be water-wise! Northern California is experiencing a drought and water restrictions may be in place.
- Pack layers so you can be comfortable in Sonoma's varying weather. Bring along a reusable water bottle to stay hydrated and limit waste.

### Trash Your Trash and Pick Up Pet Waste

- Trash hurts wildlife and contaminates waterways. Pack out everything you pack in – or be a hero and pick up other trash and litter to leave the place better than you found it.
- If a trash can is full, pack it, don't stack it. Take your garbage with you until you can dispose of it properly.
- Take your raft or tube home with you. When left on shore or in the water, rafts, tubes and other floats harm wildlife and the river ecosystem.
- Go before you go and if you have to go while outdoors, use restrooms or outhouses. Going to the bathroom off trail or by the side of the road may lead to area closures.
- Bring a plastic bag and pick up pet waste and dispose of it in a trash can. Compared to wildlife or grazing animals, pet waste contains harmful bacteria that cause illness and pollute water sources.
- Pack out all fishing lines and hooks. Discarded fishing line and hooks cause unnecessary harm to birds and other aquatic wildlife.

## Leave It As You Find It

- Leave sea stars, shells, rocks and wildflowers as you find them so others can also experience the thrill of discovery. A photograph makes for a great keepsake and preserves these natural treasures for everyone to enjoy.
- Leave gates as you find them. Many of Sonoma County's open spaces are used for grazing animals like sheep, cattle and goats. Tampering with grazing fences can result in harm to people and animals.

## Be Extremely Careful with Fire

- Check Red Flag Warnings and fire restriction advisories. Warm temperatures, low humidities and strong winds combine to create dangerous wildfire conditions. You may not be authorized to have a fire depending on drought or weather conditions.
- If you can have a fire, burn all wood to ash and douse your fire with water until it is completely out and cold before you leave it.
- Don't bring firewood from home; buy it from a local Sonoma County vendor. When wood is moved from place to place, they may also be moving invasive insects and diseases that threaten California's landscape.
- Build fires only in designated fire pits. Keep your fire small and manageable. Beach bonfires are prohibited in Sonoma County.

## Keep Wildlife Wild

- Observe or photograph wildlife and all grazing livestock from a distance. Getting close to an animal may seem harmless, but these interactions can lead to injury to humans and wildlife. Bring a telephoto lens or binoculars to help observe from afar.
- Protect wildlife – and your food – by securely storing your meals and trash. Never feed wildlife or livestock.
- Avoid encounters with black bears and mountain lions. To be safe, watch for signs of these animals and keep a far distance if you spot them.
- Pay big attention to small creatures. Rattlesnakes, ticks, and blue-green algae can have serious consequences for you, your friends, and pets. Learn about managing the risks before your adventure.

## Share the Outdoors

- Be considerate when passing others. Always yield to those traveling uphill, as well as those using a wheelchair or on horseback.
- Keep your pet leashed and under control to protect it, other visitors and wildlife.
- Be aware of your use of technology. Use headphones if you enjoy music on the trail. Check rules and regulations before using a drone. Drones are prohibited in Sonoma County Regional Parks.
- Use social media to promote good outdoor stewardship. Be mindful of what your images portray, and what your images may encourage others to do.

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Learn more about the Sonoma County Leave No Trace Seven Principles at:  
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