

LEAVE NO TRACE #4

ISSUE NO 4 | LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND



EFFECTS OF VIOLATING THIS PRINCIPLE

Some major effects of taking what you find include...

- spread of non-native invasive species
- loss of Historic and prehistoric artifacts and fossils
- deprive some animals of their resources

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND?

Leaving what you find is enjoying nature while still leaving it the way you found it. This is important because Natural objects of beauty or interest such as antlers, petrified wood, or colored rocks should be left so others can experience a sense of discovery. In national parks and many other protected places, it is illegal to remove natural objects.

Another reason why it is important to leave what you find is that animals need certain resources and we are being wasteful by taking them for fun or amusement. For example, a good scout would leave the twigs he finds in the woods so that the birds could use them for their nests.

IS IT EVER OK TO TAKE WHAT YOU FIND?

Yes, surprisingly there are certain occasions where we can take what we find. These occasions are times when the rangers give you explicit permission or if reservation regulations allow you to.

Flowers

Picking a few flowers does not seem like it would have any great impact and, if only a few flowers were picked, it wouldn't. But, if every visitor thought "I'll just take a few," a much more significant impact might result.



"What if everyone who visited took a cool cobblestone, picked a bouquet of wildflowers, or took home the cultural artifacts? That would be a loss for you and for everyone else that followed."

-Alex DeLucia, Leave No Trace programs manager



LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND AS YOU FOUND IT

1. Do not dig trenches for tents or construct lean-tos, tables, chairs, or other rudimentary improvements.
2. If you clear an area of surface rocks, twigs or pine cones replace these items before leaving.
3. Clean up the site and dismantle fire rings and constructed seats or tables.

