# A Guide for Hikers and Backpackers in the White Mountain National Forest



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Get out there... and ramble out yonder, and explore the forest, climb the mountains, bag the peaks, run the rivers, breathe deep in that yet sweet lucid air, sit quietly for a while and contemplate the precious stillness, the lovely, mysterious and awesome space.

> **Edward Abbey**, The House on Your Back



# **Your White Mountain National Forest** in New Hampshire and Maine is a rich and varied resource.

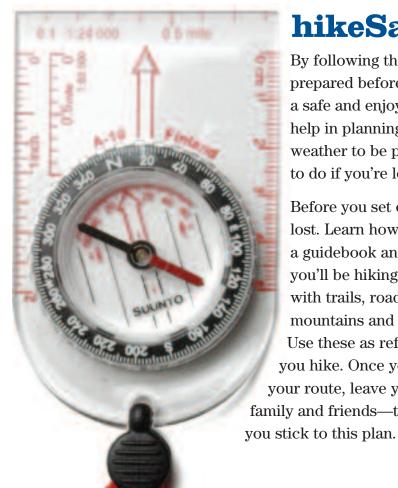
From clear mountain streams and hardwood forests, to rocky ledges and windswept alpine ridges, the Forest provides habitat for wildlife, water, wood and a place for all of us to relax and enjoy the outdoors.

There are more than 1,200 miles of hiking trails in the White Mountain National Forest with trails to match every ability level. This trail network includes portions of the Appalachian Trail, a 2,170-mile footpath stretching from Georgia to Maine.

A safe and enjoyable hiking trip begins well before your boots hit the dirt. Careful planning is the key to any mountain excursion, whether day hiking or backpacking, so plan ahead and know before you go!

Plan your route in advance by studying maps of the area. Plan alternate routes in case of bad weather. Maps and guidebooks are available at most outdoor sporting goods stores and Ranger Stations.

It takes knowledge, planning and care to ensure a safe and fun hiking or backpacking trip. We hope this guide will help get you on your way. Happy hiking!



# hikeSafe: There and Back.

By following the guidelines of hikeSafe, you can be best prepared before a hike. Being prepared is the key to having a safe and enjoyable day in the mountains. Here you'll find help in planning ahead—from the equipment you'll need and weather to be prepared for—based on the seasons—to what to do if you're lost or separated from your group.

Before you set out, take steps to make sure you don't become lost. Learn how to use a map and compass. Call ahead, read a guidebook and study maps of the area

you'll be hiking to become familiar with trails, roads, rivers, streams, mountains and other features.

Use these as reference points as you hike. Once you've determined your route, leave your trip plan with family and friends—then make sure

# **Hiker**Responsibility Code

You are responsible for yourself, so be prepared:

**1.With knowledge and gear.** Become self reliant by learning about the terrain, conditions, local weather and your equipment before you start.

# 2. To leave your plans.

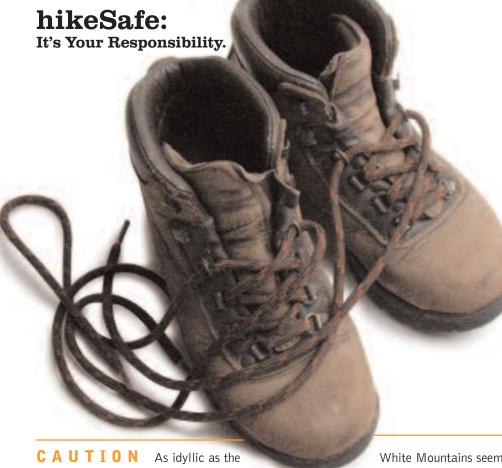
Tell someone where you are going, the trails you are hiking, when you'll return and your emergency plans.

**3.** To stay together. When you start as a group, hike as a group, end as a group. Pace your hike to the slowest person.

4. To turn back. Weather changes quickly in the mountains. Fatigue and unexpected conditions can also affect your hike. Know your limitations and when to postpone your hike. The mountains will be there another day.

5. For emergencies, even if you are headed out for just an hour. An injury, severe weather or a wrong turn could become life threatening. Don't assume you will be rescued; know how to rescue yourself.

6. To share the hiker code with others.





# Recommended clothing and equipment for White Mountain hikers and campers

Weather in the White Mountains can change quickly. Even in summer you may experience winter conditions at higher elevations.

# Ten essential items you should carry on every trip:

- Map
- 2 Compass—Be sure you know how to use your map and compass before you go!
- Warm clothing including hat and mittens
- Extra food and water
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Matches/firestarters
- 7 First aid kit/repair kit
- Whistle
- Rain/wind gear
- Pocket knife

# Add for overnight trips:

- Sleeping bag and pad
- Tent or tarp
- Cooking stove and fuel
- Extra food and water

### Other items to consider:

- Space blanket
- Medication
- Watch
- Guidebook
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Hiking boots
- Extra socks

# Add for winter:

- Extra warm clothing
- Balaclava
- Insulated boots
- Overmitts
- Snowshoes

# Add for above treeline and avalanche terrain:

- Crampons
- Face mask
- Ice axe
- Windpants
- Goggles
- Shovel
- Probe
- Avalanche transceiver

White Mountains seem, we do sometimes have problems with auto break-ins. It pays to be cautious. To help prevent car break-ins: Don't leave your itinerary on the windshield of your car.

Unfortunately, thieves may take that as an open invitation to help themselves to the contents of your vehicle.

Instead, leave your itinerary with someone back home. Let them know where you are going, what trails you plan to hike and how long you will be out. Avoid leaving valuables inside your car at trailhead parking areas. Empty the glove compartment and leave it open to show that nothing is inside. Don't park your car with the trunk backed toward the woods. Make use of the Appalachian Mountain Club's Hiker Shuttle. For information, call the Appalachian Mountain Club at: 603-466-2727. If your car has been vandalized, call the police.

# Rules and Regulations

# **Backcountry camping rules** - (Forest Protection

Areas) Because of damage from over-use, visual pollution and to prevent damage to fragile areas, some restrictions are in effect.

Check the WMNF Backcountry

Camping Rules brochure for current restrictions or ask at any Forest Service office.

# Wilderness

These Congressionally designated areas are set aside to provide solitude, primitive recreation and areas "untrammeled by man..." Special restrictions include: no motorized equipment and group size must be limited to 10 or less.

# **Fires**

Permits to build fires are not needed on the National Forest.
Fires are allowed unless otherwise prohibited, but backpacking stoves are strongly encouraged.
Fires are not allowed above treeline.

If you will be camping on private land, always obtain permission of the landowner and a fire permit from the local fire warden.

# **Recreational Parking Pass**

Money raised by the parking pass program supports recreation across the Forest. Your purchase of a White Mountain National Forest recreation parking pass helps support trail maintenance, facility improvements and education efforts such as the hikeSafe program.

# Groups

If you are leading a group and collecting money for the trip, you may need an outfitter guide permit. Contact any Ranger Station for more information.

For more information: www.fs.fed.us/r9/white

# Stepping Safely

Hikers need to be prepared for emergencies, and prevention is definitely the easiest way to go!

# Weather

White Mountain weather can be harsh and changeable. Expect the worst and enjoy the best! Rain, snow and fog are possible at any time of the year. Remember that weather in the mountains is colder and more severe than in the valleys. Always check the forecast before you leave.

# Hypothermia

The lowering of your body's core temperature below normal can lead to confusion, loss of consciousness and death—even in summer! Early signs of hypothermia may be as mild as a slight sensation of chilliness, and trouble using your hands for simple tasks. Later signs can include uncontrolled shivering, unconsciousness and death.

Prevent hypothermia by having warm clothes and dressing in layers to adjust temperatures as needed. Keep dry with high quality wind and rain gear: your body loses heat three times as fast when it's wet. Drink plenty of fluids, eat many small meals throughout the day, and avoid alcohol and caffeine. The group's pace should always be set by the slowest hiker. ALWAYS keep your group together. If anyone in your group is having difficulty, stop, rewarm him or her... AND NEVER BE AFRAID TO TURN BACK.

# Heat

Overexertion on hot summer days can lead to heat injuries. Heat exhaustion will leave you feeling tired, nauseous, dizzy and headachy. Rest, rehydration and a good night's sleep are the treatment for heat exhaustion. Heat stroke is a life-threatening illness. Symptoms include confusion, delirium and loss of consciousness. The skin may feel hot as the body's cooling mechanism fails. This is a true emergency. Cooling the patient immediately is essential. Both heat exhaustion and heat stroke can be prevented by avoiding overexertion on hot days. Pace yourself, rest often and drink plenty of water throughout your hike. You'll know that you've drunk enough water if your urine is "clear as mountain spring water."

# Lightning

Yes, it can strike twice! Pay attention to weather forecasts and avoid being caught on exposed ridges or above treeline during electrical storms. Know an escape route in case fast-moving storms catch you

off-guard.



# Medical Emergencies

Avoid over-stressing yourself or anyone in your group. Set a comfortable pace, rest often and drink plenty of water. If an emergency occurs: Stay calm. If possible, have one person stay with the injured hiker, and send two people to the nearest staffed facility or phone.

New Hampshire State Police: 800-842-3411

Maine State Police: 800-482-0730

Give the location of the injured person and the nature of the injury.

# **Cell phones**

Cell phones and other technology can be a great help—but don't rely on them to keep you safe in the backcountry. Cell phones don't always work in remote locations and even when they do, help can be a long ways away. Always be prepared to help yourself and hikeSafe!

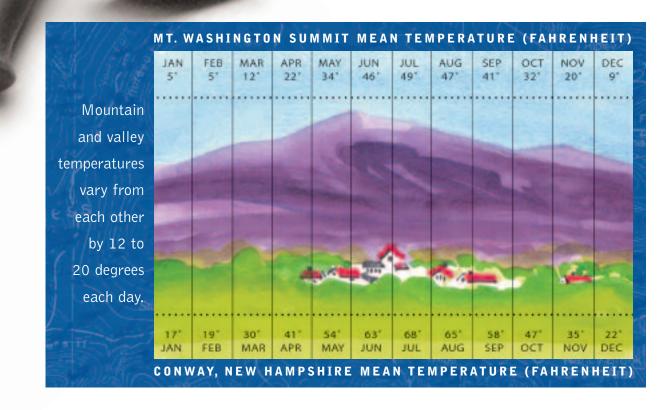
# **Water Crossings**

In spring and after heavy rains, streams can change from trickles to torrents, making crossings difficult. If you ford a stream, be extremely careful. Keeping your boots on will give you better footing and prevent your feet from going numb from the cold water. Unbuckle your pack's waist belt before starting. Use common sense. If in doubt don't cross.

# **Bugs**

Black fly season usually runs from late spring to early summer. A good insect repellent will help keep the worst of the biters away. (Some people claim that eating raw garlic will also do the trick!)

Lyme disease has been reported in New Hampshire and Maine. A good insect repellent will help repel ticks, and the threat of disease can be minimized by quick removal of any attached ticks.



# The Shelters and Cabins of the White

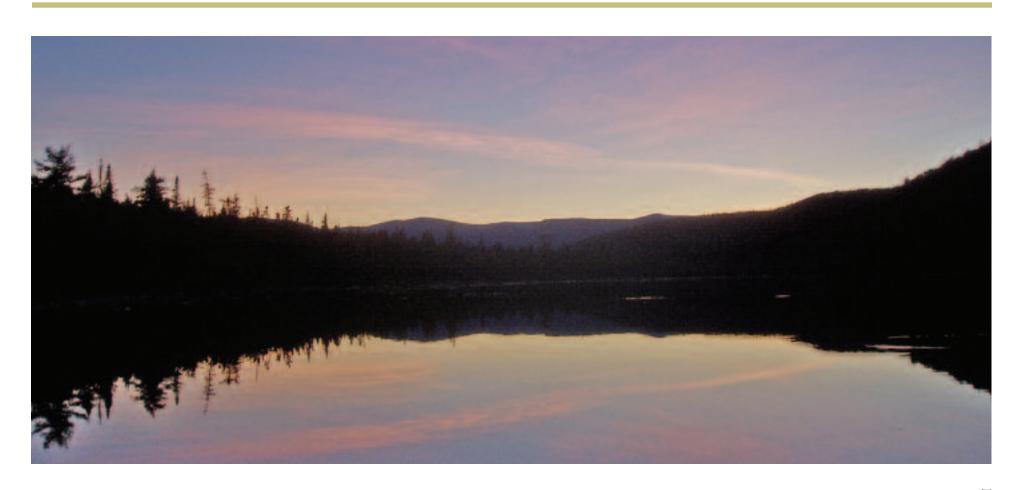
| SHELTER (MAINTAINER)                  | APPROACH/TRAILS  | FACILITIES (CAPACITY  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| aldface Shelter (WMNF)                | 2.3 mi. from parking lot, just below ledges of South Baldface  | Lean-to (6)   |
| eaver Brook Shelter (DOC)             | Beaver Brook Trail (AT): 1.5 mi. from Rt. 112  | Lean-to (8), 2 platforms (8)  |
| lue Brook Shelter (WMNF)              | Basin Trail from Wild River CG: 2 mi. to side trail, 0.3 mi. to shelter                                | Lean-to (6), platform (4)   |
| amp Penacook Shelter/Platforms (WMNF) | 3.1 mi. from the Piper Trail   | Lean-to (8), platform (4)   |
| <b>Camp 13 (13 Falls)</b> (AMC)       | Franconia Brook Trail: 5.1 mi., 2.7 mi. from Galehead Hut  | 9 tentsites (36)  |
| arlo Col Shelter (AMC)                | Carlo Col Trail: 2.3 mi.   | Lean-to (16), 5 platforms (25)                                      |
| oppermine Shelter (WMNF)              | Coppermine Trail: 2.5 mi.  | Lean-to (7), tenting  |
| ry River Shelter #3 (WMNF)            | 6.3 mi. from US 302, 1.5 mi. north of Jct. of Dry River and Isolation (west)                           | Lean-to (8)   |
| liza Brook Shelter (AMC)              | Kinsman Ridge Trail: 7.5 mi. from Rt. 112  | Lean-to (6), tenting (8)  |
| Ethan Pond Shelter (AMC)              | Ethan Pond Trail: 2.8 mi. from Willey House (US 302)   | Lean-to (8), 5 platforms (20)                                       |
| lat Mtn. Pond Shelter (WMNF)          | 4.8 mi. from Bennett Street; 5.3 mi. from Whiteface Intervale  | Lean-to (8), tenting  |
| ranconia Brook Shelter (WMNF)         | Call Lincoln Woods Visitor Center: 603-254-5270 East Branch Trail: 2.7 mi. (includes a river crossing) | 24 platforms (75)   |
| ull Goose Shelter (AMC)               | Mahoosuc Trail: 20.8 mi.; Notch Trail & Mahoosuc: 3.7 mi.  | Lean-to (8), 4 platforms (17)                                       |
| Garfield Ridge Campsite (AMC)         | Garfield Ridge Trail: 5.0 mi.  | Lean-to (12), 7 platforms (28)                                      |
| entian Pond Campsite (AMC)            | Mahoosuc Trail: 11.4 mi.   | Lean-to (12), 4 platforms (18)                                      |
| Guyot Shelter (AMC)                   | Twinway from Galehead Hut: 3.6 mi.;<br>Wilderness Trail & Bond Cliff Trail: 11 mi.                     | Lean-to (12), 6 platforms (18)                                      |
| lermit Lake Shelter (AMC)             | Tuckerman Ravine Trail: 2.4 mi.<br>Registration required at Pinkham Notch Visitor Center.              | 8 Lean-tos, 3 platforms (86 tota<br>Fee charged. Caretaker on site. |
| Imp Campsite (AMC)                    | Carter-Moriah Trail: 6.8 mi.; from Carter Hut: 6.2 mi.   | Lean-to (12), 5 platforms (20)                                      |
| effers Brook Shelter (DOC)            | Town Line Trail (AT, from Rt. 25): 1.1 mi.   | Lean-to (8)   |
| Kinsman Pond Shelter (AMC)            | Kinsman Pond Trail: 11.5 mi.;<br>Basin-Cascades Trail & Kinsman Pond Trail: 4 mi.                      | Lean-to (8), 3 platforms (12)                                       |
| Liberty Springs Campsite (AMC)        | Liberty Springs Trail: 2.4 mi.   | 10 platforms (44)   |
| The Log Cabin (RMC)                   | Lowe's Path: 2.5 mi.; no fires allowed   | Lean-to (10)  |
| It. Langdon Shelter (WMNF)            | Mt. Langdon Trail: 2.9 mi.; Mt. Stanton Trail: 5.3 mi.   | Lean-to (5)   |
| lountain Pond Shelter (WMNF)          | Mt. Pond Loop Trail (from Slippery Brook Rd.): 1 mi.   | Lean-to (6)   |
| Nauman Tentsite (AMC)                 | Crawford Path & Mizpah Cut-off: 2.5 mi.; next to Mizpah Hut  | 7 platforms (30)  |
| sgood Campsite (WMNF)                 | Great Gulf Trail & Osgood Trail: 2.5 mi.   | 3 platforms (12)  |
| The Perch (RMC)                       | Randolph Path & Perch Path: 5.3 mi.; no fires allowed  | Lean-to (8), 4 platforms (16)                                       |
| erkins Notch Shelter (WMNF)           | 7 mi. from Wild River campground; 4.3 mi. via Bog Brook Trail  | Lean-to (6)   |
| rovince Pond Shelter (WMNF)           | Province Brook Trail: 1.6 mi.  | Lean-to (6)   |
| attle River Shelter (WMNF)            | Rattle River Trail: 1.7 mi.  | Lean-to (8), tenting  |
| esolution Shelter (AMC)               | Davis Path: 3.7 mi. from US 302  | Lean-to (6)   |
| cooldination official (7 (WO)         |  |   |

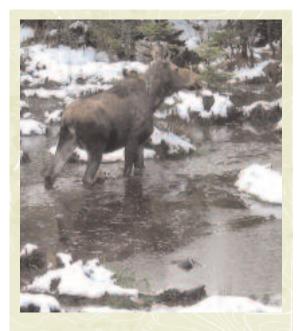
<sup>\*</sup>Caretaker may be on site and a fee may be charged. Please contact the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) or Randolph Mountain Club (RMC) for more information.

# **Mountain National Forest**

| Rocky Branch Shelter #2 (WMNF) | Rocky Branch Trail (from Rt. 16): 3.7 mi.;<br>4.1 mi. from Rocky Branch Shelter #1 | Lean-to (8)  |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Rogers Ledge Tentsite (WMNF)   | Kilkenny Ridge Trail (from South Pond Rd.): 4.7 mi.                                | Tenting (8)  |  |
| Sawyer Pond Campsite (WMNF)    | Sawyer Pond Trail: 4.5 mi. from Kanc; 1.5 mi. from S                               | awyer River Rd. Lean-to (8), 5 platforms (20)  |  |
| *Speck Pond Shelter (AMC)      | Speck Pond Trail: 3.7 mi.; Mahoosuc Trail: 26.1 mi.                                | Lean-to (8), 6 platforms (30)  |  |
| Spruce Brook Shelter (WMNF)    | Wild River Trail: 3.2 mi. from Wild River Campground                               | Lean-to (6), 2 platforms (8)   |  |
| Three Ponds Shelter (WMNF)     | Three Ponds Trail: 2.5 mi.   | Lean-to (10), tenting  |  |
| Trident Col Tentsite (WMNF)    | Side path from Mahoosuc Trail: 6.6 mi.   | 4 tentsites (20)   |  |
| Unknown Pond Tentsite (WMNF)   | Unknown Pond Trail (from York Pond Rd.): 3.3 mi.                                   | Tentsites (16)   |  |
| Valley Way Tentsite (WMNF)     | Valley Way Trail: 3.1 mi.  | 2 platforms (8)  |  |
| CABINS CABINS                  | LOCATION   | FACILITIES (CAPACITY)  |  |
| Black Mt. Cabin (WMNF)         | Black Mtn. Ski Trail: 1.4 mi.  | Stove, water from spring is not reliable (8).<br>Cabin fee charged. Reservations call<br>(603) 447-5448. |  |
| Cabot Cabin (WMNF)             | Bunnell Notch to Mt. Cabot Trail: 4.6 mi.  | Stove, water is unreliable (8).<br>No fee; no reservations.  |  |
| Crag Camp (RMC)                | Randolph Path to Spur Trail: 3.2 mi.   | Caretaker in summer (20). Group size limit is 10<br>Fee charged per person/per night; no reservations    |  |
| Doublehead Cabin (WMNF)        | Doublehead Ski Trail: 1.8 mi.  | Stove, no water (8). Cabin fee charged.  |  |







# Wildlife

A wide variety of wildlife including frogs, turtles, snakes, birds and mammals live in the Forest. If you walk quietly, you may see many animals or signs of animals along the trail. Most likely, you'll see red squirrels, chipmunks and lots of birds. If you are lucky enough to see animals in the wild, never approach them too closely. Give them plenty of space and respect.

Black bears are abundant in some areas of the National Forest.

They have been known to visit shelters and tent platforms. You can prevent bear/people conflicts by following these guidelines:

# Don't feed the bears!

# Be careful with food scraps.

Pack out everything you pack in. Don't bury food since it will attract animals.

# Store your food 10 feet up and 5 feet out on a tree limb that cannot support a bear.

Hanging food will also protect it from additional predators like mice and squirrels.

Keep cooking and sleeping areas separate.

Don't approach bears to take pictures. Remember that bears are wild and unpredictable animals. Use a telephoto lens if you want close-up pictures.

If you do meet a bear, you'll probably only get to see its backend running away! If you're lucky enough to see one face forward, a little noise on your part will probably send it running. If the bear stays, slowly move away and give it plenty of space.



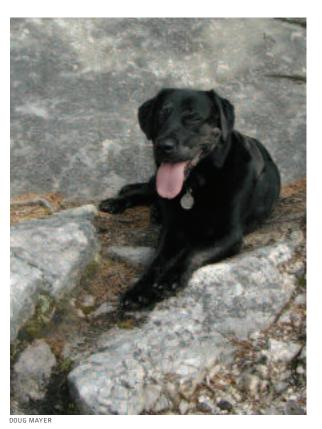
# Land Above the Trees Hiking and Camping in the Alpine Zone

With 8 square miles of land above the treeline (where trees are less than 8 feet tall), the White Mountain National Forest contains the largest alpine area east of the Rocky Mountains and south of Canada. This beautiful but fragile landscape of ragged alpine plants needs your help. Please: Don't be a tundra trampler! Stay on the trail or step carefully from rock to rock, avoiding any plants. Camp below treeline, or only where snow is 2 or more feet deep. Use a backpacking stove. Wood fires are not allowed above treeline. Help protect the alpine zone. It's a tough place to grow.

# Help keep invasive plants out of the White Mountain National Forest

As you prepare for your trip remove all weed seeds and plant parts from boots, clothing and gear. Avoid planting non-native species in your home gardens. While hiking leave plants in their place. Don't take any part of a plant with you, including flowers, berries, stems and leaves. It may be a native where you gather it, but not where it winds up.

For more information, please visit www.invasivespecies.gov



# Not everyone likes dogs

If you bring your dog hiking, have it under verbal or physical restraint at all times. Be considerate of other hikers. Carry a leash and use it when around other people, or as necessary, and don't forget to clean up after your dog.

Dogs are a lot like people. Hiking is hard work. If your dog has spent the winter lying on the couch, you can't expect him to be a "super dog" out on the trail. Hiking above treeline, or on rocky, exposed trails can be especially hard on a dog's paws.

Watch your dog for signs of stress and fatigue, making sure to give him plenty of rest and water as needed.



# Winter on Mount Washington

**Average winter winds:** 45 MPH, with regular gusts greater than 100 MPH!

Record low: -47 F.

Mid-winter average: 4.8 F.

There is snow and mountain fog on two out of three winter days.

# Winter Equipment

In addition to regular summer gear, add:

- Heavier weight clothes: wool or polypropylene. (Avoid cotton it won't keep you warm if it gets wet. Layers will keep you warmer than one heavy coat. Extra hat and mittens may save your life.)
- Winter boots: Felt pacs, "mouse" boots or double mountaineering boots. Your summer boots won't keep you warm in winter.
- 3 Ice axe and crampons for above treeline.
- © Emergency bivy sack or sleeping bag.
- 6 Heavy duty wind and rain gear.
- 6 Avalanche transceivers if traveling in avalanche zones.

For avalanche
bulletins and more
information about
Tuckerman Ravine
go to:
www.tuckerman.org

# The stillness of the winter woods provides peace and solitude unlike any other time of year.

Winter hiking and climbing take special preparation and planning. You must be prepared for extremes of cold, wind, snow and even rain. Skis or snowshoes are almost always needed. (Even if there isn't much snow at the start of your trip sudden storms can quickly change that.) For above-treeline trips an ice axe and crampons are necessities.

# Winter Hazards

Before striking out in winter, it's a good idea to be experienced with summer hiking and camping. A minor injury can become life-threatening in the harsh winter environment. Be sure that someone knows your trip plans.

Avalanches and ice falls are winter hazards, especially in steeper ravines. Someone in your group should have a good knowledge of avalanche safety.

Forest Service Snow Rangers post avalanche warnings for Tuckerman and Huntington Ravines. Warnings are posted at Pinkham Notch Visitor Center, Tuckerman Ravine, and are also available by telephone from the Androscoggin Ranger District. **Heed the warnings—they could save your life.** 



Leave No Trace Thousands of visitors to the White Mountains have a tremendous impact on the land. It's up to all of us to minimize our impact, to travel softly, leaving no trace of our visit so that future generations can enjoy the woods and mountains we all love. Be a low-impact hiker by following these Leave No Trace Principles:

# Plan Ahead and Prepare

Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.

Prepare for extreme weather, hazards and emergencies.

Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6.

# Travel and Camp on **Durable Surfaces**

Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grass or snow.

Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.

Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.

# In popular areas:

Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.

Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.

Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.

# In pristine areas:

Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.

Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

# **Dispose of Waste Properly**

Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food and litter.

Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.

# **Leave What You Find**

Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.

Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.

Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.

Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

# Minimize Campfire Impacts

Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.

# Respect Wildlife

Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.

Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife can damage their health, alters natural behaviors and exposes them to predators and other dangers.

Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.

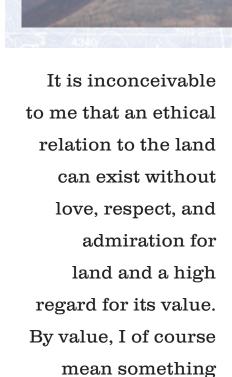
# **Be Considerate of Other Visitors**

Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.

Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.

Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

For more information go to: www.lnt.org. Also see the White Mountain National Forest Backcountry Rules Brochure.



Aldo Leopold, **A Sand County Almanac** 

far broader than

economic value...

# **Forest Service Ranger Stations**

# Forest Supervisor's Office Androscoggin White Mountain **National Forest**

719 Main St. Laconia, NH 03246 603-528-8721 603-528-8722 TTY

### Ammonoosuc/Pemigewasset **Ranger Station**

1171 NH Route 175 Holderness, NH 03245 603-536-1315 603-536-3281 TTY

### Ammonoosuc/Pemigewasset **Ranger Station**

660 Trudeau Rd. Bethlehem, NH 03574 603-869-2626 603-869-3104 TTY

# **Ranger Station**

300 Glen Road Gorham, NH 03581-1399 603-466-2713 603-466-2856 TTY

# **Saco Ranger Station**

33 Kancamagus Highway Conway, NH 03818 603-447-5448 603-447-3121 TTY

# **Evans Notch Visitor Center**

18 Mayville Road Bethel, ME 04217-4400 207-824-2134 207-824-3312 TTY

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