



BC MARINE TRAILS

Code of Conduct

Long Form Version

May 7, 2020

You are on sensitive First Nations traditional land. Treat this land with respect. Disturb nothing, take nothing.

- Be aware of the rich cultural and heritage values of this site for First Nations.
- Do not disturb any First Nation cultural material encountered.
- No harvesting or removal of any animals, plants or inanimate objects (rocks, artifacts, etc.)
- Adhere to any First Nations protocols for visitors that may be in effect. Protocols will be posted at bcmarinetrails.org on the BCMT online map.

Campfires below high tide line only. No upland wood foraging; use driftwood only. Leave no visual evidence of fires. Adhere to fire bans.

- Always adhere to fire regulations first and foremost, particularly fire bans.
- The only ecologically friendly campfire is no campfire at all. A significant negative ecological impact of campfires is the elimination of woody debris necessary for forest nutrition. Never scavenge the upland for firewood. Use driftwood if you must have a campfire, or best practice, forego the campfire.
- A campfire may seem beautiful while burning, but the legacy can be fire pits filled with trash, mounds of charcoal, half-burned logs, tree damage and felled trees cut for firewood. Other risks are off-site vegetation trampling for wood retrieval, and the threat of forest fires. Best practice is to enjoy this beautiful location as is and to not have an open fire.
- Proper, safe camping stoves used with care are a best practice for food preparation.
- Moving rocks to create fire rings has significant potential damage to ecologies and First Nations values. This type of damage is not always easily apparent. Avoid moving rocks and never create fire rings.
- Fires in the upland camping area will degrade soils and sensitive surfaces as well as the campsite location overall by creating permanent scars. If you must have a campfire, have it below the current high tide level so the main impact is washed away.
- Never burn drift logs or large chunks of wood. Never leave partially burned debris.
- Ensure your campfire is completely extinguished and cold to the touch when you leave or before you go to sleep. Campfires buried in sand might be walked upon, leading to severe burns. Cover with water until all heat is gone.
- BCMT is advocating burning only driftwood to avoid impacting forests. Site visitors should be aware this comes with significant personal health risks from smoke toxicity. Best practice is to forego campfires.
- Keep fires small and use small amounts of firewood using pieces of wood generally smaller than wrist-sized.
- BCMT asks you to ensure campfire locations are free of debris and clean when done. If there is evidence of your fire when you depart, that impact is your legacy. Best practice is to not have campfires.



If a toilet is unavailable, no human waste should be left on site. Pack out and preferably discharge from paddlecraft mid-channel on an ebb tide. Alternatively, ensure tidal flush sweeps it out to sea. Use tidal flush only in locations where shellfish won't be contaminated.

[Please note this and other Code elements will be supported by a public education program to be unveiled as a later phase in this program.]

- Pathogens within human waste pose significant health risks and can survive a year or more. For this reason, on-site disposal by cat-holes and burying waste on site is not recommended.
- The only way to completely avoid impacting a site through human waste is by packing it out. This is easily done through commercially available products designed for this purpose. BCMT urges you to investigate this as an option to avoid grave environmental issues at locations where toilets are not available and where the site's use is above its capacity to naturally deal with the volume of human waste.
- Disposal at sea meets provincial and federal regulations in certain conditions. Collecting human waste in suitable containers designed for this purpose means potentially harmful shore impact can be avoided. The marine environment is well suited to manage such waste in small quantities. Best practice is to dispose of waste mid-channel or open ocean on an ebb tide so waste is washed out to sea.
- If you are adverse to the best practice of packing out waste, use the intertidal area at the lowest possible tide. Ensure the beach is subject to a good tidal flush -- or pack it out. Ensure the beach substrate is suitable for disposal -- or pack it out.
- Any digging to dispose of human waste can potentially disturb cultural sites such as First Nations middens. Best practice to avoid the impact of digging is to pack it out.
- Intertidal disposal of human waste has the potential to contaminate shellfish growing areas. Ensure no shellfish are in the area or pack it out.
- Many different methods are now commercially available for packing out human waste. These types of methods represent the strongest outdoor ethic and are strongly recommended by BCMT. Use plastic-free disposal options when possible.

Stay to the established campsite area and on established trails to avoid trampling sensitive ecologies.

- Even low levels of trampling can reduce vegetation height, cover, and biomass. Higher levels can lead to vegetation loss and significant ecological changes in a location.
- Sensitive habitats line the coast, from sand dunes to coastal bluffs, that are sensitive to trampling and erosion. These should be avoided.
- Coastal vegetation is a valuable buffer to protect sensitive ecologies. Removing this buffer for recreational benefit such as better views can lead to soil erosion and change the ecological composition as plants are lost or replaced by more resistant species. Do not denude the coastal buffer of shrubs or other essential natural vegetation that protects the shore against salt spray. Access sites through designated trails only.
- If a site plan is in place, ensure your footprint is limited to designated locations.



- If no site plan is in place, ensure your footprint is limited only to the extent needed for your stay.
- Ensure site use follows best practices and avoids impacts that will increase a site's footprint such as poor toiletry habits, scavenging for firewood or creating trails.

Do not dispose of gray water in freshwater or in the upland. Minimize or eliminate use of soaps.

- Environmental damage from gray water is greatest in a terrestrial environment where bacteria can flourish. Use the lowest intertidal marine area as best practice for water disposal and pack out all solids.
- Avoid disposing of gray water near streams or lakes.
- Biodegradable soap does not biodegrade in water. Use only small amounts or avoid using when possible.
- Instead of soap, a washcloth, water and friction can clean any human.
- Hot water, a scrubbing pad or sand/gravel can clean any dish.
- Alcohol-based waterless hand sanitizers kill germs without contaminating the environment.

Maintain regulated distances from marine mammals and avoid disturbance to all other wildlife.

- If you cause an animal to move, you are too close.
- Minimize your impact on wildlife; abide by wildlife viewing regulations and guidelines. Become an expert on them by reading [here](#).
- Many marine mammals and birds are sensitive to impacts that are not regulated by regulations or guidelines. Read the full list of BCMT best practices for species potentially harmed by close contact to paddlers [here -- link to BCMT species of interest page to be created].
- Keep your campsites and picnic sites animal-wise. [Link to animal-wise resource.]
- BCMT assesses all marine trail sites for endangered species in proximity to marine trail sites, both plant and animal. Be active in these assessments by volunteering to undertake one. Also, be aware of Site Values that may be imperiled during your visit. Research information about the sites you are visiting at bcmarinetrails.org before departing.

Leave nothing behind after your visit. Leave a site in its natural state and modify nothing.

- 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.
- The BCMT goal is sites in a natural, unaltered state with the smallest footprint possible to accommodate its use. If no designated camping area exists, choose a beach or sandbar. Areas with gravel or small rocks are best.



- Other best locations are durable surfaces such as barren rock, barren trampling-resistant substrates such as gravelly or sandy shorelines, or dense shade that supports little vegetative ground cover.
- If users follow this Code of Conduct, the site can remain in a natural, unaltered state into the future.
- Be part of the solution. Follow the Code, and undertake a Site Impact Evaluation on behalf of BCMT to report back to us on the site's health.

