



It's great to get out and enjoy the wealth of natural environments that we have in Northern Ireland whether on foot, on a bicycle, in a canoe or on a horse.

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Enjoy the Great Outdoors

A guide for responsible users



The leading public body for the development of sport in Northern Ireland



Parts of the natural environment are special because they are wild and untamed; while other areas are managed for farming, horticulture or forestry purposes and many areas are in private ownership. There is a natural draw to wild and beautiful land and seascapes not just for physical challenges – but often because they provide a sense of peace, tranquillity or awe. They refresh the soul!

However, in such places the weather may be quick to change, the terrain may be uneven and the ground steep so the risks of becoming lost or gaining an injury can be quite real. It is therefore important to treat the outdoors with respect and have the right clothing, equipment and the appropriate knowledge and experience before setting out.

Overcoming challenging experiences outdoors creates a great sense of achievement and there is little to replace the buzz of scrambling to the peak of a mountain, paddling down a rapid, surfing an Atlantic wave or galloping down a beach on a horse.

However, when you choose to take part in activities in the outdoor environment that involve an obvious risk, you are ultimately responsible for your own actions since you have assumed the risks associated with the activities you have chosen to do.

Landowners and occupiers also have an obligation (as far as is reasonably practicable) not to do anything which endangers you.

By following the principles of Leave No Trace you can show that you are acting responsibly in the outdoors:

Plan ahead and prepare e.g.

- Know where to go, what to wear and bring and what to do in an emergency.

Be considerate of others e.g.

- Keep dogs on a lead unless permission is granted to do otherwise – but at all times dogs must be under close control.
- Let natural sounds be heard.
- Be considerate about those who work in the natural environment like farmers and other land managers.
- Be aware of other activities taking place at the same venue.

Respect farm animals and wildlife e.g.

- Try not to disturb any wildlife.
- Don't frighten farm animals.
- Note that cattle can be aggressive if you have a dog. If cattle appear aggressive let go of the lead.
- Never feed farm animals or leave waste food.

Travel and camp on durable ground e.g.

- Please use paths where they exist.
- Camp only where appropriate or permitted.

Leave what you find e.g.

- It is against the law to pick certain wild flowers or remove protected artefacts.

Dispose of waste properly e.g.

- **Take all your litter home - don't leave anything.**
- Even biodegradable items should be taken away.

Minimise the effects of fire e.g.

- Be careful that camping stoves and BBQ's don't cause a wildfire and never use them in a tent.
- Never throw a cigarette butt or matches away.

For further information, training and guidance on how to be responsible for yourself, others and the environment visit www.leaveonotraceireland.org

Information on the best places to go and enjoy the outdoors can be found on the following websites:

WalkNI.com

CycleNI.com

CanoeNI.com

BeachNI.com

Activity providers can be found at:



OUTDOORNI.COM



www.adventuremark.co.uk

Look for **Adventuremark** accredited providers who have been assessed and work to recognised industry standards.



Hillwalking and Mountaineering
www.mountaineeringireland.ie



Canoeing and kayaking
www.cani.org



Cycling
www.cyclingulster.com



Orienteering
www.niorienteering.org.uk



Surfing
www.isasurf.ie