# CODE *of* CONDUCT

BC MARINE TRAILS

# First Nations

**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 area for First Nations.
- Leave First Nations cultural material undisturbed.
- Any digging can potentially disturb cultural sites such as First Nations middens.
- Leave any animals, plants and inanimate objects (rocks, artifacts, etc.) as you found them.
- Adhere to First Nations protocols. You can find these at bcmarinetrails.org.

# Campfires

**Best practice is to not have campfires. Any fires below high tide line only. No upland wood foraging; use driftwood only. Leave no visual evidence of fires.**

- Adhere to fire regulations, particularly fire bans.
- Best practice is to not have campfires. The only ecologically friendly campfire is no campfire at all.
- Camping stoves used with care are a best practice for food preparation.
- If you must have a campfire, have it below the current high tide level so the main impact is washed away. Fires in the upland will degrade soils and sensitive surfaces, creating permanent scars, charcoal residue and other damage.
- Use driftwood only. Wood scavenging causes vegetation trampling and the elimination of woody debris necessary for forest nutrients and biodiversity. Never scavenge the upland or cut trees for firewood. Even dead trees may be valuable wildlife trees.
- Avoid moving rocks and creating fire rings, which can damage sensitive ecosystems and First Nations values.
- Keep fires small. Burn chunks of wood smaller than wrist-sized and never drift logs. Ensure all wood is burned so no debris is left.
- Before leaving a fire unattended, ensure your campfire is out and cold to the touch. Campfires buried in sand might be walked upon, leading to severe burns. Cover with water until all heat is gone.
- Leave no evidence of your campfire when you depart.

# Human Waste

When a toilet is unavailable, best practice is to dispose all human waste below the high tide line and ensure tidal flush sweeps it out to sea. Alternatively, where shellfish will be contaminated, pack out or discharge waste mid channel. When visiting a BC or National Park, defer to park specific best practices.

- Packing out human waste is the only true way to have zero impact on the environment — tidal flush is often the lowest impact 'leave it behind' option.
- Pathogens in human waste pose significant health risks and can survive a year or more. For this reason, cat-holes and burying waste on site are not recommended.
- Dispose of waste mid-channel or in open ocean so it is dispersed and natural marine processes neutralize it.
- If the site is appropriate for tidal flush, use the lowest intertidal area.
- Avoid disposal of human waste near shellfish harvesting areas to prevent contamination.
- Urine can attract animals. It is best disposed of in the sea or, if well dispersed, in forested areas away from fresh water, campsites and picnic areas.

# Footprint

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

- Keep sites in an unaltered, natural state with the smallest footprint possible to accommodate its use. If no designated camping area exists, choose a durable surface such as a beach or sandbar, gravel or pebble, barren rock with no moss or lichen, or dense shade with little vegetative ground cover.
- Even low levels of trampling can lead to vegetation loss and significant ecological damage.
- Avoid sensitive habitats, from sand dunes to coastal bluffs, that are vulnerable to trampling and erosion.
- Coastal vegetation is a valuable buffer to protect sensitive ecosystems. Removing this buffer for recreational benefit such as better views can lead to soil erosion and change the ecological composition as plants are lost. Leave intact any coastal buffer that protects the shore against salt spray. Access sites through designated trails only.
- Best practice is to avoid impacts that will increase the site's footprint. 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.

# Grey Water

**Best practice is to use the lowest intertidal marine area for grey water disposal. Pack out all solids and minimize or eliminate use of soaps.**

- Environmental damage from grey water (waste water from cooking and cleaning) is greatest in a terrestrial environment where bacteria can flourish.
- Avoid disposing of grey water near streams or lakes.
- Biodegradable soap may not biodegrade in
- water. Use only small amounts or avoid using when possible.
- Instead of soap, a washcloth, water and friction is adequate for bathing. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can kill germs.
- For cleaning dishes, use hot water, a scrubbing pad or sand/gravel.

# Wildlife

**Maintain regulated distances from marine mammals and avoid disturbing wildlife. If you cause an animal to move, you are likely too close. Keep your site clear of food and other animal attractants. Never feed animals.**

- Minimize your impact on wildlife; abide by wildlife viewing regulations and guidelines.
- Many marine mammals and birds are sensitive to impacts that are not subject to regulations or guidelines. Read the full list of BCMT best practices for species potentially harmed by close contact to paddlers.
- Practice "bare" camping. Store food safely in bear-resistant storage containers or hang by a rope in an area inaccessible to bears and other animals. Don't store food, toiletries and other aromatic items in or near your tent. Return fish remains to the sea.

# Natural State

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

- Pack it in, pack it out, including all trash, food spills and scraps — even if it is biodegradable.
- If users follow this Code of Conduct, the site can remain in a natural, unaltered state into the future.
- Be part of the solution. Pick up garbage and follow the Code.

# Acknowledgements