

# Into the Yukon Wilderness

What you need to know about travelling safely and gently through the Yukon Wilderness



Includes:

- No-trace checklist
- Wilderness safety
- Bear safety
- Fishing, hunting and firearms
- Wildlife parts and products
- First Nation lands

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# Into the Yukon Wilderness

Welcome to Canada's Yukon. Some of you have come a long way to explore our territory, and some of you may call it home. And now you're getting ready to step into the wilderness that surrounds you.

You're going to be a long way from help, so it's important that you bring along the right gear. And if you run into any difficulties, you'll have to rely on your own judgment, and abilities, because your cell phone won't work outside our communities and limited highway corridors. In many ways, your wilderness travels will be similar to the journeys of the old-time prospectors, trappers and First Nation peoples. But there are some important differences.

Jack London didn't need a licence to fish or hunt. You do. You'll also have to follow the laws that apply to fishing, hunting and using the land. And you'll be expected to travel through the backcountry leaving few signs of your passage. These things are not difficult to do; they only require a commitment from you. We are certain that you will care for this wilderness. The fact you have picked up this booklet is the first step.

So go ahead and plan the wilderness journey you've been dreaming about. Use this booklet as a starting point. Then visit bookstores, outdoor stores and online resources to find more information about wilderness trip planning.

If you're considering a guided trip, you can find a list of wilderness tourism operators in the Yukon Vacation Planner available at Visitor Information Centres and on the internet ([www.travelyukon.com](http://www.travelyukon.com)).

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# Wilderness Safety

In most cases your backcountry trip will take you far from help and rescue. So you must be prepared to travel safely and handle any emergencies on your own.

This section will help determine whether or not you are prepared for wilderness safety. It is your responsibility, however, to ensure that you have the necessary skills, experience and equipment to have an enjoyable, injury-free adventure.

If you have any doubts about your abilities, consider a guided trip. There are many licensed wilderness guiding companies that can provide a safe, memorable experience. Check the Tourism Yukon website for more information ([www.travelyukon.com](http://www.travelyukon.com)).

## Ensure you have the necessary backcountry skills

If you start a river trip or other expedition with virtually no skills or experience, you're putting yourself and other members of your party at risk. The best thing to do is take a course in outdoor recreation skills, or learn from an experienced friend, before starting your trip. Outdoor recreation courses not only give you confidence, they also provide an opportunity to meet other responsible backcountry travellers. You can find out about these courses by contacting your local outdoor club.





## Travel Smart in the Yukon Outdoors

If you are going on any type of wilderness trip you need to be prepared for:

- adverse weather conditions, and
- potentially dangerous wildlife encounters.

If your trip involves any type of boat, you need to have the required safety gear in working condition. For more information call the Boating Safety Infoline (1-800-267-6687) or visit the Canadian Coast Guard website ([www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca](http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca)).

If your trip involves river paddling, you need to know how to:

- Deal with rapids, log jams and sweepers.
- Prepare your craft for whitewater.
- Perform basic river rescues.

You also need to carry the appropriate rescue gear and life jackets to fit all members of your party.

If your trip involves skiing, snowmobiling or other snow sport, you need to know how to:

- Identify whether you are in avalanche terrain.
- Minimize your risk in these areas.
- Conduct a rescue.

The best way to learn these skills is to take an avalanche training course. Check avalanche conditions and discussions at [www.yukonavalanche.ca](http://www.yukonavalanche.ca) (Klondike Region). Remember, once out there, you are on your own.

If your trip involves hiking you need to know how to:

- Use a compass,
- Make hazardous stream crossings.
- Negotiate terrain obstacles such as steep ridges, boggy areas and hummocky ground.

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## Check beforehand

There are very few marked trails or boating routes in Yukon. And you won't find warning signs before rapids, treacherous landscape features, or other hazards, so checking ahead of time may save your life.

To check ahead of time:

- Pick up a guidebook for your route at a Yukon bookstore.
- Buy the topographic maps for your travel route ahead of time, because there is no guarantee that all maps will be available at local vendors. Maps can be obtained from vendors across Canada and in other countries. For an up-to-date list and pdfs search for the Canada Map Office website.
- Talk to someone who has already travelled the route. Staff at Visitor Information Centres or Environment Yukon offices may be able to help.

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## Prepare for medical emergencies

Being prepared to treat injuries and illnesses is one of the basics of wilderness safety. Since you never know who will need care, all members should have these skills.

St. John's Ambulance and Red Cross are two organizations offering first aid courses, including basic wilderness first aid training. Private companies offer advanced or specialized wilderness first aid courses. Check with your local recreation and safety organizations for contact numbers and addresses.

To prepare for medical emergencies:

- Be aware of each member's allergies, health problems or medical conditions, and ensure you have the equipment and skills to deal with them.

- Ensure that your first aid kit is waterproof, adequate for wilderness situations, and includes a wilderness first aid book.
- Be prepared to treat stings and insect bites (some insect bites can cause strong reactions in those who have never been bitten).
- Know how to prevent, identify and treat hypothermia.
- Ensure that your group has adequate health insurance to cover medical treatment in Yukon.

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## Prepare for rescue if necessary

If you follow the basics of wilderness safety, chances are you won't need to be rescued. But if a rescue is required, to make sure it goes smoothly:

- Let someone know about your travel route, schedule, the number of people in your party and the color of tents, backpacks and other equipment so they can alert the authorities if you don't return as planned. (You can put all of this information on a *Yukon Smart Travel Plan* form, available widely or at [www.hss.gov.yk.ca/travelsmart](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/travelsmart).)

### Camping on Public Land

While you cannot go out into the wilderness and build your own cabin unless you own the land, you can pitch your tent on public land for up to 100 person/days. Just be sure to determine that it is not First Nation, municipal, private or other tenured land. Also, you cannot clear the site, a trail or road, or claim the site as your own.

- Carry signalling equipment such as an emergency personal locator beacon (EPLB), satellite phone, VHF or HF radio, signal mirror, whistle and flares. (If you carry an EPLB, you should know that once you turn it on, rescue efforts begin immediately and hundreds of person-hours and thousands of dollars may be involved).
- Remember that outside of Yukon communities, there is no cell service.
- Obtain insurance to cover a rescue because, depending on the circumstances, you may have to pay all or part of rescue costs.
- Learn about the international distress signals for wilderness situations.
- Be aware that solo travelling means there will be no one to go for help if you are injured or ill, and travelling with one partner means the victim may have to be left alone while the partner goes for help.



# Bear Safety

Travelling in the Yukon wilderness involves certain risks, including the possibility of a bear encounter. Although the actual danger from bears may be small, it is real. The best defence is a cool head armed with good knowledge of bear ecology and behaviour.

## Backcountry bear safety

- Stay alert and look ahead for bears and bear signs such as tracks, scat, fresh diggings or tree scratches.
- Choose routes with good visibility where possible.
- Make noise to let bears know you're coming, especially in thick brush, berry patches or near running water. Loud talking or singing is better than using bells.
- Travel in groups.
- Don't approach a bear for a better look or photo. Use binoculars or a telephoto lens.
- Choose a campsite away from wildlife trails, spawning streams, signs of recent bear activity and bear foods such as berry patches.
- Pack your food in airtight containers, preferably bear-proof canisters. Pack out garbage in airtight containers or burn it and pack out unburned items.
- Don't bring greasy, smelly foods like bacon and canned fish.
- Cook and store food well away (100 m) from your camp, downwind if possible.
- At night, use a rope to hang your food from a tree, at least 2.5 m (7 ft) from the ground if possible.
- Consider bringing a can of bear spray and other bear deterrents such as bear bangers or an air horn. If you do, learn how to use it.

Pick up *How you can stay safe in bear country* from any Environment Yukon office or online at [www.env.gov.yk.ca/bearsafety](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/bearsafety).

## If you see a bear...

Stay calm. Stop and assess the situation. Don't run, shout, or play dead too soon. (An encounter is considered an attack only when the bear contacts you.)

## If the bear is unaware of you...

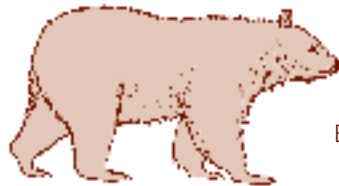
Try to move away without attracting its attention. Detour around the bear or wait it out.

## If the bear becomes aware of you...

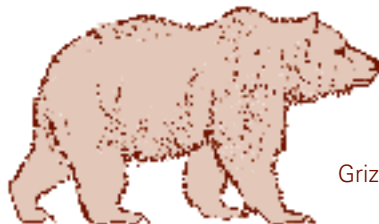
Talk to it in a low voice. Wave your arms slowly. Back away. Don't run.

## If the bear starts to approach...

Stand your ground. Stay calm. If you're with others, group together. Prepare to use your bear spray. If you have a pack, keep it on. It may protect your head and neck. Watch the bear's behaviour to try to determine whether it is defensive or non-defensive.



Black Bear



Grizzly Bear



If the bear appears stressed (yawning, huffing, moaning, barking, guttural sounds, salivating, paw swatting, a short charge), it is **defensive**. It may have cubs or a kill nearby. A defensive bear attacks to remove a perceived threat.

- Try to appear non-threatening.
- Talk in a calm voice.
- Start backing slowly away.
- If the bear keeps approaching, or even if it charges at you, stand your ground and keep talking. Fire a short burst of bear spray only if you think the bear will touch you.
- If the bear makes contact with you, fall on the ground and play dead. (Drop to the ground, face down, hands clasped tightly over the back of your neck and legs slightly apart to prevent the bear rolling you over.)

- When the attack stops, lie still and wait for the bear to leave.

If the bear does not appear stressed (intent on you with head and ears up, follows you and does not go away), it is **non-defensive**. It may be only curious, or it may be motivated by food and see you as prey.

- Talk in a firm voice.
- Move out of the bear's path.
- If it follows you, stop and stand your ground. You are now in real danger. Shout and act aggressively. Look big (stand on a log) and stamp your feet. Use your bear spray when the bear is within 5 m (15 ft). Direct it at the nose and eyes.
- If it attacks, fight back. Use any weapon you can on its eyes and nose. Don't give up!

# Fishing, Hunting and Firearms

## Fishing at a glance

You need a valid Yukon Angling Licence if you want to fish in Yukon. A Yukon Angling Licence entitles you to fish for all species except salmon. To fish for salmon, you also need a Salmon Conservation Catch Card.

When you buy your licence you will receive a copy of the *Yukon Fishing Regulations Summary*. The regulation booklet is available in English, French and German, and includes illustrations of all Yukon fish species. You must follow the catch limits and all other regulations described in the booklet. You can fish with a rod, line and hook only. All other methods of taking

fish such as set lines require a permit.

Angling licences are available at Environment Yukon offices, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) offices, and most highway lodges, sporting goods stores and convenience stores throughout Yukon.

Additional information on fish species and catching fish is provided in the brochures *Yukon Freshwater Fishes*, *Anglers Guide to Yukon Stocked Lakes*, and *Fishing On Yukon Time*, available at Visitor Information Centres or [www.env.gov.yk.ca/fishing](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/fishing).



## Hunting at a glance

Regulations around hunting are different for residents and non-residents, with some special rules for youth.

Residents may purchase a Yukon Hunting Licence once they have lived in the territory for one year. This allows the hunting of big game and small game species.

Young resident hunters (born after April 1, 1987) must successfully complete a recognized hunter education program to hold any hunting licence.

Non-residents may purchase a licence to hunt small game without a guide, in the summer.

In the fall, you can also hunt grouse, ptarmigan and waterfowl.

To hunt big game, non-residents must be accompanied by a special guide or a licensed big game guide employed by an outfitter. So you can see that hunting is not going to be a big part of your summer wilderness trip.

**Respect the animal.  
Take only what you need.  
Use all that you take.**

*"When you kill something, the animal gives its life for you. So you've got to give thanks to the great spirit. Something had to die for you to continue with your life. That's the way I look at it."*

Art Johns,  
Carcross-Tagish First Nation

## Small game

You must have a valid licence to hunt small game such as snowshoe hares, Arctic ground squirrels, porcupine, grouse and ptarmigan. Small game hunting licences are available at Environment Yukon offices, and selected sporting goods stores. You'll receive a copy of the *Yukon Hunting Regulations Summary* when you purchase a licence.

## Migratory birds

You must have a valid permit to hunt migratory birds such as ducks and geese. Migratory bird hunting permits are available at postal outlets throughout Yukon. You will receive a copy of the migratory bird hunting regulations when you obtain your permit. Open season for most zones runs from September 1 to October 31.

## Big game

Yukon big game animals include moose, caribou, bison, mountain sheep, mountain goat, deer, elk, black bear, grizzly bear, wolf, coyote and wolverine.

Licences to hunt big game are available at Environment Yukon offices and, for residents who had a licence the previous year, at select vendors. Laws around season dates, bag limits, permits, hunting on First Nation Settlement land, etc. are published each summer in the *Yukon Hunting Regulations Summary*.

For a list of big game outfitters contact the Yukon Outfitters Association at (867) 668-4118, [info@yukonoutfitters.net](mailto:info@yukonoutfitters.net) or [www.yukonoutfitters.net](http://www.yukonoutfitters.net).

For more information about big game hunting, contact an Environment Yukon office.

## Firearms at a glance

A firearm is not a necessary piece of equipment for a Yukon wilderness journey. In fact most Yukon residents and visitors do not carry a firearm on their canoe trips and hiking trips. It's a heavy item, you can't use it to "live off the land" and, in the hands of someone who is not well-trained in its use, it can be a lethal accident waiting to happen. Firearms are not allowed inside Kluane, Ivvavik and Vuntut National Parks.

If you decide to bring a firearm for hunting, or for bear protection (it's a personal choice), you will have to follow Canada's strict firearm control laws including the following:

- When not in use a firearm must be unloaded and separately from the ammunition. It must be stored in a locked container, OR fitted with a trigger lock, OR have the bolt removed. Ammunition must be stored separate from the firearm, unless both items are in a locked container. (These storage laws do not apply when you are in a remote wilderness location.)
- Firearms must always be transported unloaded. When left in a vehicle they must be locked in the trunk, if there is one, or kept out of sight in the locked vehicle. If the vehicle cannot be locked someone must be with the firearm. In a remote wilderness area, a firearm can be left unattended as long as it is out of sight and trigger locked. If it is needed for predator control, it does not have to be trigger locked.
- The laws described here apply to hunting rifles and shotguns only. Hand guns and other restricted weapons are subject to additional laws.

For more information call the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program toll free at 1-800-731-4000.

# Wildlife Parts and Products

**Wildlife parts** include antlers, hides, claws, teeth, meat and any other part of a wildlife carcass.

**Wildlife products** include carvings, tanned hides, taxidermy products and any other items made from wildlife parts.

The buying and selling of these items, and their export from Yukon, is regulated by wildlife conservation laws.

## Buying them

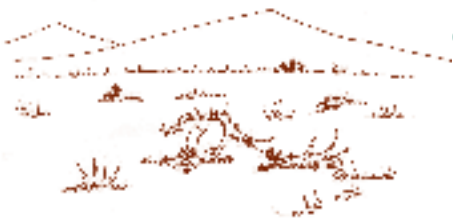
When you buy a wildlife part or product, you'll need to get some kind of paper work to show where it came from. If you don't have this paper, the item may be seized or you may be refused an export permit. When you buy from a licensed gift shop or taxidermist, they'll give you a receipt which is all you need. If you want to buy a wildlife part or product from someone who is not licensed, ask them to get a *Wildlife Act* permit to authorize the sale. Contact an Environment Yukon office for the most current regulations.

## Finding them

If you want to keep any part of a wildlife carcass you find, you must bring the item to an Environment Yukon office and ask for a permit to keep it. The officer will ask a few questions and if everything is in order, a permit will be issued. The exception is naturally shed antlers which may be kept without a permit.

## Taking them out of Yukon

You must get an export permit from an Environment Yukon office before you take **any** wildlife parts or products out of Yukon. A special CITES permit is needed to take out of Canada any part of the following species: grizzly bear, polar bear, black bear, wood bison, wolf, lynx or otter. Many countries, such as the United States and Germany, have their own import requirements for wildlife parts. Please check with the importing country for details.



Commercial wilderness tourism operators must follow special regulations applying to no-trace wilderness travel and waste disposal (*Yukon Wilderness Tourism Licensing Act*). For more information, contact the Registrar. Phone (867) 667-5648  
Email [yukon.parks@gov.yk.ca](mailto:yukon.parks@gov.yk.ca)

# No-Trace Checklist

## Keeping Yukon green and pristine

This section will help you leave little (or no trace) of your travels through the backcountry. Our shared goal is to preserve high quality Yukon wilderness experiences for visitors and residents alike.

If you are new to Yukon or to frontcountry and wilderness travel, this guide will start you on the right track. But even a well-seasoned traveller will find useful up-to-date information. Adopting no-trace practices in the wilderness will help keep Yukon green and pristine.

## What does impact mean?

The most obvious impact is garbage left in the wilderness. Another is the disturbed ground and damaged vegetation caused by too many people camping or travelling through an area. One impact that is often overlooked is the altered behaviour of wildlife that have been attracted by the food humans carry into the backcountry, or the waste they leave behind.

While some impacts involve damage to ecosystems, others damage the aesthetics of the wilderness or human experience. Toilet paper blown onto a riverside shrub may have little environmental impact, but it can ruin the pleasure of wilderness travel.

## Linking to the North American no-trace movement

This checklist is one of many leave no-trace guides produced by various organizations

and governments throughout North America. Some of the content is unique to Yukon and is based on suggestions from local backcountry travellers. The general messages, however, are consistent with ideas promoted in other leave-no-trace literature.

Environment Yukon has adopted the educational and ethical principles promoted by Leave No Trace Canada, Canada's leading proponent of leave-no-trace practices. Those principles are reflected in the headings used in this checklist. Leave No Trace is not a set of rules and regulations, but suggestions to help you make conscious impact choices.

## No-trace checklist

### 1. Plan to leave no trace

You probably plan your trip well in advance. Planning to leave no trace is one step in the process. Many of these techniques are common sense; the rest will become habit with practice.

- Larger groups have larger impacts so plan on a small group size. Two to six people is ideal. If you can break a large group into smaller, independent groups that are well-separated, you will reduce the overall impact.
- Get together well ahead of your trip so that your entire group can discuss and plan no-trace techniques.
- Meals should be planned so that you have enough food but little waste.



- Eliminating bulky packaging reduces garbage. Select items that aren't overpackaged. Repackaging in odour-reducing plastic bags or other airtight containers can reduce the weight and size of your pack, and lessen wildlife-attracting odours.
- Avoid bringing smelly, easily-spoiled foods that will be attractive to scavengers. This includes fresh meat, fish and seafood. Small one-meal cans of such food are an option. Plan to burn the cans, then pack them out and deposit them at the nearest recycling bin or community recycling centre.
- It is good practice to pack out apples and orange peels and other fruits and vegetables, as these can become wildlife attractants, make small animals sick and decompose very slowly in the North.
- Learn as much as you can about the region's wildlife so you will know how to minimize potential impacts. View the many wildlife viewing publications on Environment Yukon's website or pick-up copies at our offices and Visitor Information Centres.
- Read the appropriate sections of this booklet to find out about the laws that apply to hunting, fishing and using First Nations lands.
- Choose travel and camping gear carefully, for both safety and minimal impact. Try to plan for all conditions and environments that you may experience.
- Use topographical maps to help you plan low-impact travel routes and campsites. Usually, 1:50,000 or 1:250,000 scale maps are best. Pay attention to the land.
- Plan to pack a stove and enough fuel for reliable heat and minimum impact. If you do plan on a campfire, take a tarp for a mound fire or carry a firepan.
- Bring an appropriate container if you decide to pack out your own feces.

## 2. Camp and travel on durable surfaces

### When hiking

For the hiker, most considerations relate to keeping ground vegetation healthy and intact so that plants recover quickly.

- Use existing trails to avoid creating new impacts. If the trail is used by wildlife, be alert. Read the bear safety section in this booklet for more information.
- When on a trail, hike single file to prevent widening the trail, even if it is wet or muddy.
- Where there are no trails, select a route over durable terrain such as gravel creek beds, sandy or rocky areas, or grassy vegetation. Try to avoid steep, loose slopes and wet terrain. If you must walk across vegetated areas, spread out to avoid creating new trails.
- In winter, snow and ice will help ensure your tracks are gone after the next snowfall. Avoid water-laden soil in the alpine and during spring melt.

### When camping

Even an overnight stop can leave a lasting impression on the land and the next wilderness enthusiast. Keep the following suggestions in mind.

- Look for a campsite early so you can be selective.
- Keep campsites small. Focus activities where vegetation is absent or durable.



- Try to choose sites that are already impacted. If possible, leave the site cleaner than it was when you arrived. Cleaning up, reducing the number of fire circles, and encouraging regrowth in damaged spots all help make the site better for the next visitor.
- When choosing a new campsite, look for durable terrain. Bare rock, sand, fine gravel, snow and ice are the most forgiving surfaces. Plants that can best sustain the impact of camping are generally those living on coarse-grained, well-drained, fairly level soils. A few examples are grasses, kinnikinnik, arctic willow and mountain avens.
- When travelling by water, consider camping on gravelbars or sandbars. Spring floods will purge these sites so that even slight traces of your camp will be removed. But remember, heavy rains can make some rivers rise quickly and dramatically because landscapes containing permafrost or exposed bedrock cannot absorb much runoff.
- Try to keep access routes to water and other commonly used places as inconspicuous as possible. Vary your route between such areas. Wearing light runners or sandals in camp will also help to minimize impact and soothe sore feet.

## 3. Dispose of waste properly

Garbage is a major concern in the back-country. But there are ways to dispose of virtually everything.

- If you have a hot fire, burn paper garbage such as toilet paper, pads and tampons to reduce odours that attract animals. Sift through the campfire ashes and pack out anything that remains.
- Pack out any garbage or toilet paper that you don't burn. Double- or triple-bag it to reduce odours. An airtight, reusable garbage container may be a better option.
- Don't bury garbage. Scavenging wildlife

will dig it up, spread it around, and perhaps suffer injury or death from it. Pack it out.

- Make a final sweep before you leave camp. Small items such as twist ties, small pieces of food or bits of plastic are easy to overlook. A fun challenge is to try to leave a camping site with no sign of you having been there.

### Wastewater and waste food

- Plan to wash your dishes in a container, then drain the dishwater into a hole well away from tents and standing water. Remember to refill the hole with soil before you leave. Use a small strainer to catch food particles, which can then be packed out or burned. These steps can help reduce food odours, prevent contamination of water sources, and avoid unsightly scraps washing up on shorelines.
- You can also get rid of strained, soap-free wastewater in a swift-flowing river. Fling it far out into the current to ensure dilution. This is a better option than using a hole in the ground because it completely eliminates food odours.
- Another way to reduce food odours in camp is to have a meal stop well before you stop to camp. By keeping cooking odours, spilled food and dishwater well away from your campsite, you can avoid attracting scavenging wildlife.
- Avoid or minimize the use of soaps and shampoos. Biodegradable products are essential. Use them well away from water to avoid contaminating an otherwise pure lake or stream.

### Human waste

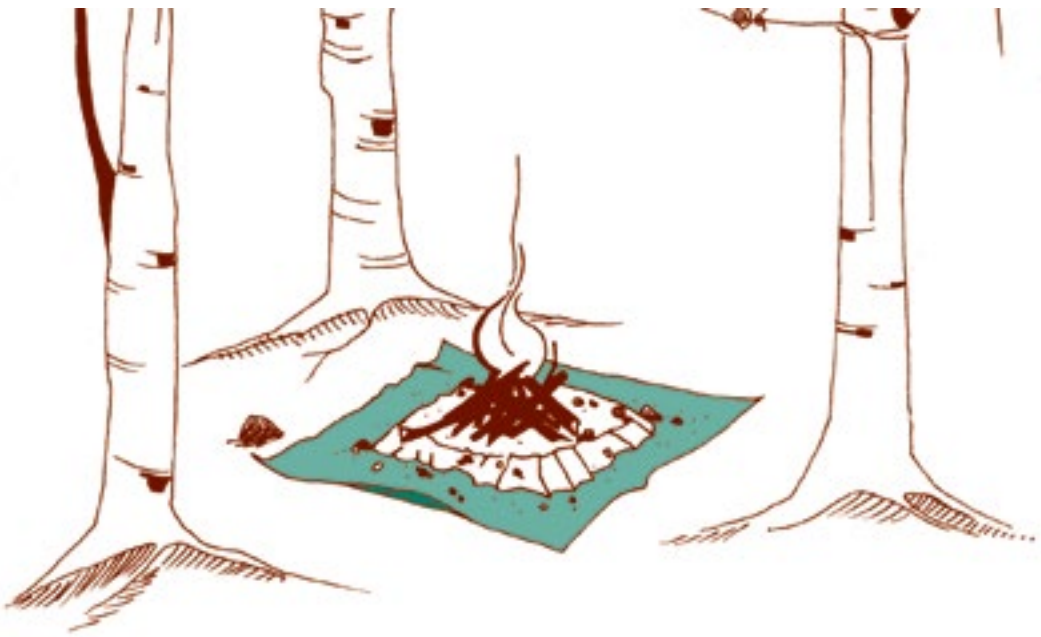
- Use outhouses when available.
- Your toilet should be at least 60 m (200 ft.) away from any body of water; even further if you are camped on a floodplain. Feces can be disposed in a shallow, 15 cm (6 in.) cathole dug in the

soil with a small trowel. Add surface soil and stir with a stick to encourage decomposition. Use the remaining soil you have dug out to cover things afterwards. Pick a site well away from any other catholes and far from any campsite.

- In the North, bacterial action is much slower than in more southerly climates. Your organic garbage and human waste takes much longer to decompose.
- Permafrost will slow decomposition. Try to choose toilet sites where permafrost is well below the surface, or absent, and where there is some depth of soil. South-facing, open slopes are a good choice.
- Consider stopping for bowel movements along your travel route rather than at your campsite. This will help reduce impacts at popular campsites.
- Used toilet paper should either be put in a paper bag and burned in a campfire or packed out with your other garbage. Naturally decomposing alternatives such as moss, leaves, snow and grass may be better than paper.
- If your group is large and you must remain in one area for an extended time, dig a latrine or pack out your waste. The latrine should be approximately 30 cm (1 ft.) deep and 60 m (200 ft) away from water. Throwing earth into it after each use will help decomposition and reduce odours. Better still, keep your group small, and change campsites on a daily basis.







## 4. Leave what you find

### Historic artefacts

- Historic artefacts, archaeological specimens, or fossils must be left undisturbed. It is unlawful to collect such items without a valid permit. You must report an accidental discovery of historic resources to the Cultural Services Branch, or to the appropriate First Nation if the find is on First Nation land. Record a GPS location if you can. For more information, contact the Cultural Services Branch at (867) 667-8589, or email [tour yukon@gov.yk.ca](mailto:tour yukon@gov.yk.ca). You can also call 1-800-661-0408 toll free from anywhere inside Yukon.

### Leave it natural

- Cutting trees, excessive berry or flower picking and building tables, shelters or other structures may diminish the next visitor's wilderness experience and may impact food and shelter that wildlife depend on for survival.

## Garbage/Litter

Dropping litter in the backcountry is an offence under the Yukon *Environment Act*.

## 5. Minimize campfire impacts

Yukon has abundant firewood in many places. But certain areas have lost part of that wilderness feeling because of blackened circles of rocks, other campfire-related debris and broken tree limbs.

Campfires also pose a risk of starting forest fires. Many fires have been started by travellers who let their campfire get out of hand. Sparks, or fires that have spread underground through peat or roots can smolder for days, weeks or months before erupting.

There are many types of inexpensive, light-weight, efficient and reliable backpacking stoves that can eliminate the need for campfires. Always carry one of these stoves so that you will have the option. If it is safe to have a campfire, however, consider the following suggestions.

- Use an existing fire circle. If there is more than one circle, eliminate the others if you can.

- Keep fires small.
- Campfires built directly on the ground will leave lasting scars. Fire destroys surface vegetation and sterilizes the soil. When considering whether or not to build a fire, ask yourself if it is necessary and what effect it will have.
- If you choose to build a campfire on an undisturbed site, consider using a firepan or making a mound fire. This is done by piling sand or gravel from a disturbed site on a large tarp. Make the pile about 20 cm (8 in.) thick to prevent the heat from destroying underlying vegetation. When finished, put the sand or gravel back where it came from.
- Use only dead wood, preferably from fallen trees. The smallest, dead, dry branches from a spruce tree are great fire starters. Small pieces of dead, dry willow burn hot, with mild smoke. Collect only what you need, keep the fire small, and take your wood from different locations. Sawcuts on stumps are sure signs that someone has been there before, so be discreet if you do any sawing.
- Burn wood and coals down to ash. Stir and drench the site until you feel no hot spots with your hand. Collect any refuse, then scatter the ashes.
- Sandbars and gravelbars are ideal campfire sites if there is no flood threat. The remaining indications of your campfire will be washed away during high-water periods. You may still wish to use a mound fire or firepan set upon rocks to minimize your impact on vegetation.
- Always use a stove in areas where fires are prohibited, where a fire hazard exists, or where there is little dead wood available.
- A winter campfire can be a true no-trace fire if you build it on top of deep snow or ice. If small, the fire may not even reach ground level before its purpose is fulfilled. And the remaining ash you have scattered will be covered by new snow in a few days.

## Cutting trees

The only reason you may cut or damage a tree without a valid timber cutting permit is to build a campfire. Only dry/dead trees (standing or down) may be used.





## 6. Respect Wildlife

- Wildlife viewing is one of the thrills of backcountry travel. Give animals ample space and distance and remain quiet and still to prolong your viewing opportunities and minimize the animal's stress.
- Binoculars, scopes, and telephoto lenses (300 mm or more) are the best tools for observing wildlife. They allow you to watch an animal's natural behaviour from a safe distance. If the animal notices you, you are probably too close and causing undue stress. And you may be putting yourself at risk.
- Don't camp where there are signs of obvious wildlife use such as nesting, denning, feeding or rutting sites.
- Never feed wild animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviours, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely. Keep a clean camp.
- Don't follow fleeing or retreating wildlife. You may be separating a mother from her young, depleting the animal's energy reserves and putting yourself in a dangerous situation.
- Be especially wary of what seem to be orphaned young. In all likelihood, the mother is nearby. Any attempts to help could provoke an attack from the mother. Under most circumstances, it is best to let nature take its course.
- Learn behavioral characteristics of wildlife you expect to encounter. Knowing signs of aggressive behaviour, fear, and avoidance actions can help you respond appropriately and limit your impact on even the smallest creature
- Control pets or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young and during winter.



## 7. Be considerate of others

Showing consideration for wilderness residents and other travellers helps make everyone's journey more enjoyable. Noise, and even the sight of brightly coloured tents and clothing can detract from a wilderness experience. On the other hand, in some situations making noise will help avoid bear encounters. Brightly coloured gear may also be important in a rescue or an air pickup. So, appropriate behaviour or gear depends on the circumstances.

The key is to keep others in mind when planning and travelling.

### Wilderness cabins

Most of the cabins you'll find in the backcountry belong to licensed trappers who use them during the winter trapping season. Please do not disturb these cabins or any traps or equipment you find in wilderness areas. Chances are, someone is counting on that cabin being in good shape, and the equipment being in place, when winter returns.

### Thanks for thinking no-trace

By practicing no-trace ethics, your example, and your willingness to share your knowledge, will help keep Yukon green and pristine for future residents and visitors just like you.

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## For more information

Organizations that offer Leave No Trace training in Yukon include the Yukon Conservation Society, NOLS Yukon and Environment Yukon's Parks Branch.

Many excellent publications and websites are available to provide a more comprehensive understanding of no-trace practices. One of the sites is Leave No Trace Canada ([www.leavenotrace.ca](http://www.leavenotrace.ca)). You can also check [www.yukonparks.ca](http://www.yukonparks.ca).

# First Nation Lands

## Locating First Nation Settlement Lands

First Nation Settlement Lands are parcels of land located within each First Nation's Traditional Territory. Settlement Land can be designated Developed or Undeveloped. The general right of access (outlined below) applies on **Undeveloped Land only**. It is your responsibility to determine the status of the land you wish to access.

## Travelling and camping on Undeveloped Settlement Lands

### Your rights

You have the right to enter, cross and stay for a reasonable period of time on Undeveloped Lands for non-commercial recreation, including camping and fishing, subject to the responsibilities described below.

### Your responsibilities

When using Undeveloped Lands, you must NOT:

- Damage the land or structures
- Interfere with the use and enjoyment of the land by the First Nation, or
- Commit acts of mischief.

A person who does any of these things is considered to be a trespasser.

### Waterfront right-of-way

A waterfront right-of-way exists from the high water mark to a distance of 30 metres inland, along most navigable waterways, including those beside or within Settlement Lands. You have the right to stop-over, camp and use dead wood to make campfires within a waterfront right-of-way.

Be aware, however, that some Settlement Lands along rivers extend through what would otherwise be the waterfront right-of-way, and may be closed to public camping and fishing. These are identified in the *Yukon Fishing Regulations Summary*.

## For more information

To find out where First Nation Settlement Lands are located, and whether they are designated Developed or Undeveloped, visit an Environment Yukon office or the First Nation office in the Traditional Territory through which you will be travelling to view the relevant maps.

## Hunting on First Nation Settlement Lands

Yukon First Nations require hunters to have written consent to hunt on their Settlement Lands. If you plan to hunt any type of wildlife in Yukon you must find out where these lands are located. The larger blocks of First Nation land closed to public hunting are marked on maps in the *Yukon Hunting Regulations Summary* booklet available at Environment Yukon offices or [www.env.gov.yk.ca](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca). Smaller blocks are marked on detailed maps which can be viewed at Environment Yukon offices or First Nation offices.

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## Environment Yukon

### Whitehorse District

10 Burns Road  
Box 2703  
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6  
Phone (867) 667-5652  
Email [environmentyukon@gov.yk.ca](mailto:environmentyukon@gov.yk.ca)

### Carmacks

102 Nansen Rd.  
Phone (867) 863-2411

### Dawson City District

Dawson City Museum, 2nd flr  
Phone (867) 993-5492

### Faro District

In the Solar Complex, Campbell St.  
Phone (867) 994-2862

### Haines Junction District

109 Pringle Street  
Phone (867) 634-2247

### Mayo District

Yukon Government Admin. Bldg,  
Centre St.  
Phone (867) 996-2202

### Ross River District

Across from the Dena General Store  
Phone (867) 969-2202

### Teslin District

Km 1246 Alaska Highway  
Tel (867) 390-2685

### Watson Lake District

On Centennial Ave,  
across from Home Hardware  
Phone (867) 536-3210

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## For further information

**Toll free** (from within Yukon)  
1-800-661-0408

**Email** [environmentyukon@gov.yk.ca](mailto:environmentyukon@gov.yk.ca)

**Web** [www.env.gov.yk.ca](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca)

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## Visitor Information Centres

### Whitehorse

100 Hanson Street  
Box 2703  
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6  
Phone (867) 667-3084  
Fax (867) 393-6351  
Email [vic.whitehorse@gov.yk.ca](mailto:vic.whitehorse@gov.yk.ca)

### Beaver Creek

Across from the Westmark Inn  
Phone (867) 862-7321

### Carcross

In the old train station  
Phone (867) 821-4431

### Dawson City

At the corner of Front & King St.  
Phone (867) 993-5566

### Haines Junction

In the Da Ku Cultural Centre  
Phone (867) 634-2345

### Watson Lake

At the junction of the Alaska Hwy  
& Robert Campbell Hwy  
Phone (867) 536-7469

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## For tourist information

**Phone** (867) 667-5340

**Toll free** 1-800-661-0494

**Email** [vacation@gov.yk.ca](mailto:vacation@gov.yk.ca)

**Website** [www.travelyukon.com](http://www.travelyukon.com)

### Territorial Parks

[www.yukonparks.ca](http://www.yukonparks.ca)

### National Parks

[www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca)

### Travel Smart

[www.hss.gov.yk.ca/travelsmart](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/travelsmart)

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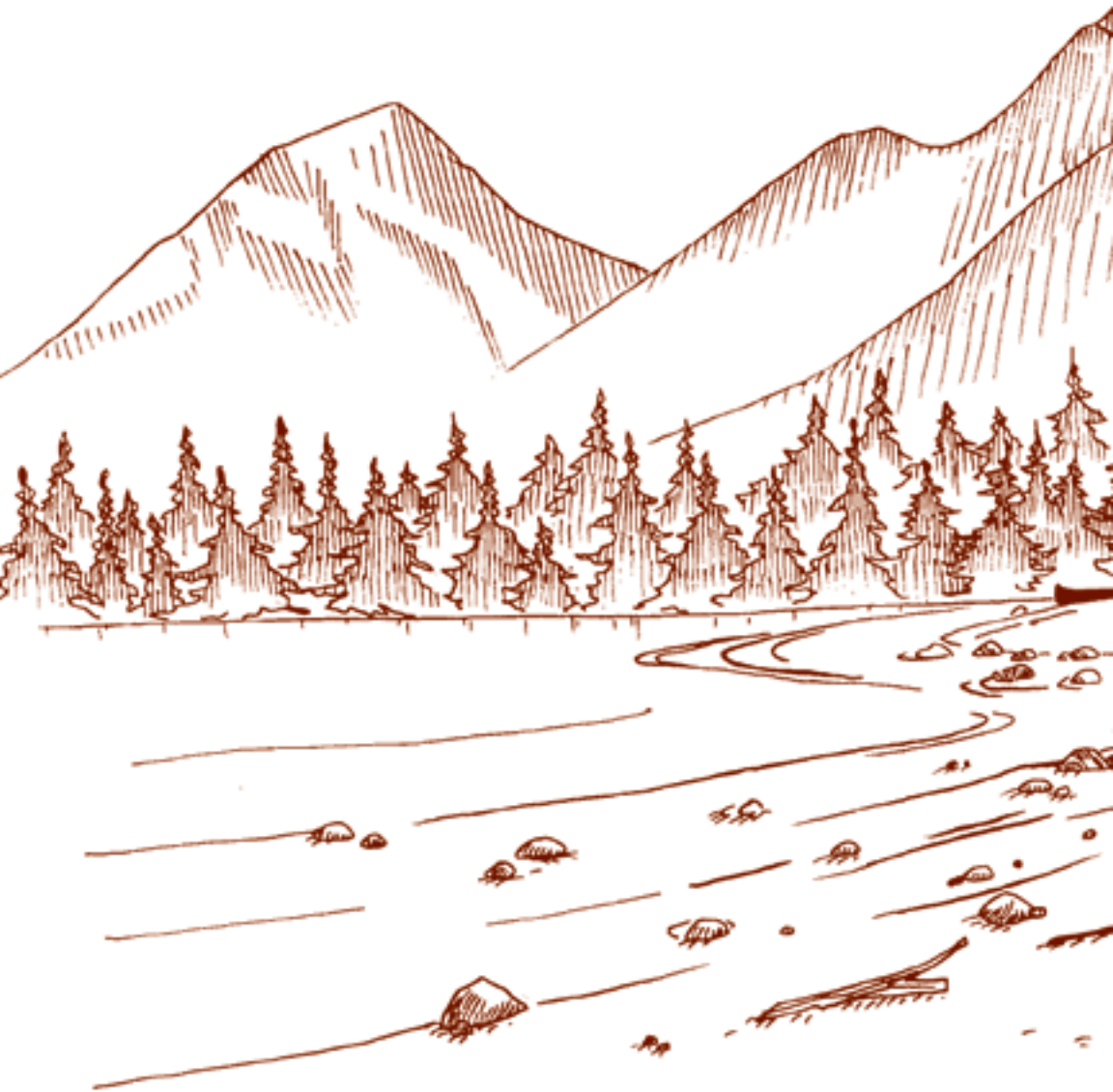
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## How you can help

If you see or suspect someone is violating our hunting, fishing or environmental laws, don't confront them and risk an unpleasant reaction. That's our job. You can help by watching carefully and recording the facts including:

- date and time
- location
- number of people involved
- description of the people
- description of the vehicle and licence plate number
- details of the violation or activity

As soon as you can, **call the TIPP line at 1-800-661-0525** and report the details of the offence. You'll be helping our conservation efforts and you may be eligible for a significant cash reward.



Finished with your copy? Pass it on.