

Irish Forests

Over 11.5% of the total landmass of Ireland is made up by forests, a number which continues to grow. At least 25% of our forests consists of broadleaf trees. Coillte is a custodian of over 440,000 hectares of forested land, and provides access to wooded areas so that we may engage and enjoy in many recreational activities. Forests are vital to our lives, and provides many natural services including protection of the soil from erosion, reduces flooding, and provides a habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals. Many visitors and campers to our forests seek to protect this fantastic resource for future generations.

Help us by learning about responsible recreation while enjoying our beautiful forests.

leavenotraceireland.org

Leave No Trace Ireland is a not-for-profit company made up of partner organisations with a shared interest in encouraging responsible enjoyment of Ireland's natural environment.

Our mission is to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnership throughout the island of Ireland.



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www.leavenotraceireland.org

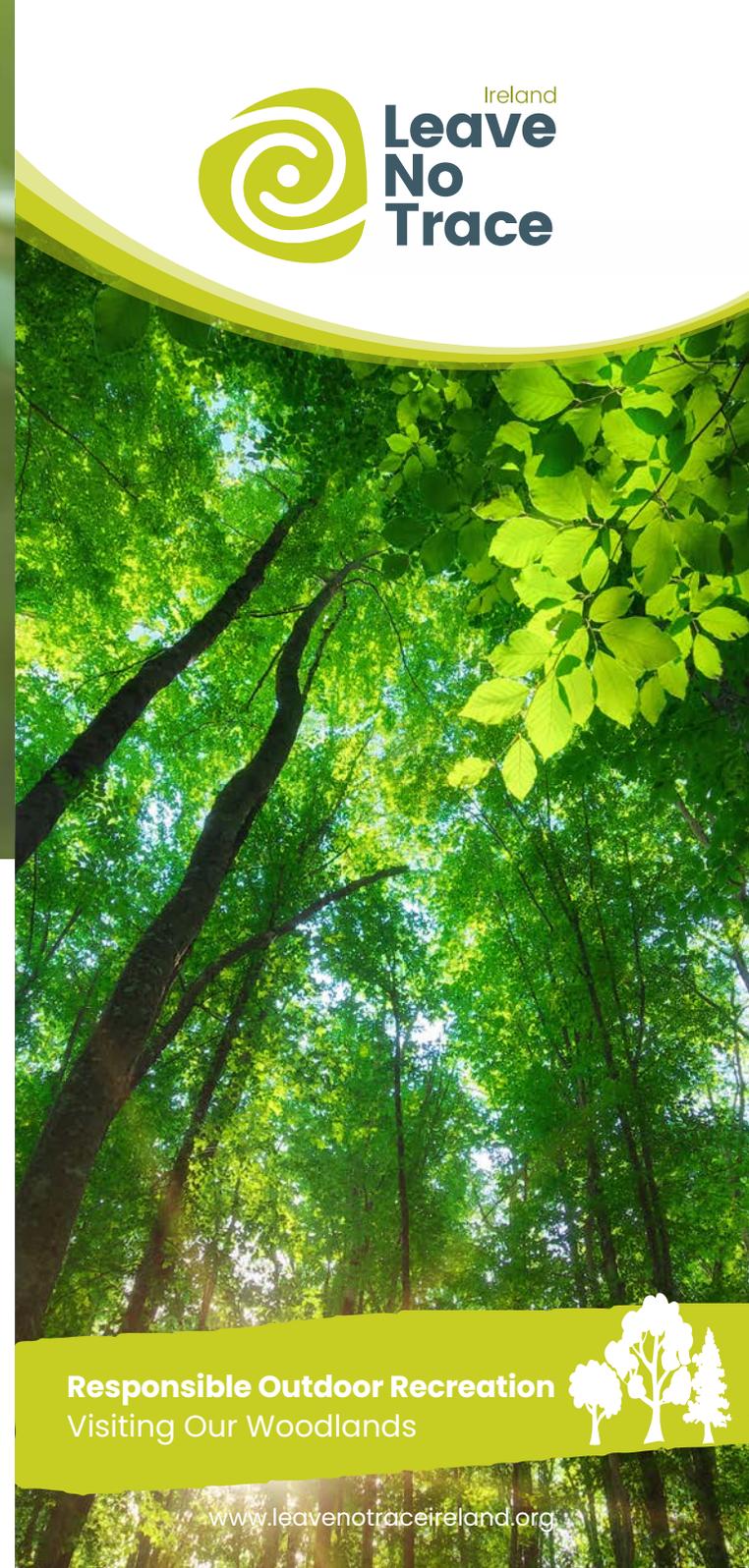


Leave no trace - show you care when visiting our woodlands

Visitors to our national forests play an essential role in protecting and conserving the environment. They act as custodians of the land and are often first to notice and report pollution incidents or other environmental concerns. We have the power to protect these fantastic yet fragile ecosystems.



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Responsible Outdoor Recreation
Visiting Our Woodlands



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1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

Discover who is responsible for the forest you wish to visit. Research their website or contact them to learn the regulations, make sure your recreational activity is permitted there, and check whether there are particular concerns for that area. Check the weather forecast and prepare for changeable weather. Ensure you have the relevant skills, equipment, plenty of food and suitable clothing. Let someone know where you're going, and what time you expect to return. For environmental, safety and social reasons, split large parties into smaller groups of less than 10 people (ideally between 4-6).



2. Be Considerate of Others

When visiting forests for recreational activities, respect the rights of other visitors and observe local etiquette. Schedule your trips for quiet times to reduce congestion at park entrances. Remember to park carefully and avoid blocking entrances and gateways, as land management and emergency services may need to be able access.

3. Respect Farm Animals & Wildlife

The abundance of wildlife found in our forests can be vulnerable to different forms of disturbances. Avoid feeding animals, be conscious of wildlife during sensitive times (such as mating, nesting, raising young and winter), and assess wildlife's reaction to your presence. If you are causing disturbance, move away quietly. If you cross farmland to access the forested area, please leave gates as you find them, and keep a distance from farm animals. Check whether dogs are permitted in the forest you're visiting. Show consideration for others and local farmers by always keeping your dog on a lead. Always pick up after your dog, bag it and bin it, or bring it home with you.

4. Travel & Camp on Durable Ground

Our forests are filled with a range of fragile habitats and, in some cases, form essential natural flood defences. It is important to protect these habitats, and visitors should stay on established roads and tracks and use dedicated car parks. Visitors should avoid widening erosion by keeping to the centre of tracks, even when wet and muddy. This will reduce further damage. With permission, campers should camp in designated camping areas on durable ground, and at least 30m away from the nearest water body. Leave an area as you found it, or better.

5. Leave What You Find

Prevent the spread of invasive species in our forests, scrape any mud and leaves from footwear, pushchairs, bikes, cars, dogs and horses before leaving woodlands, or travelling to a new site. Leave rocks, plants, animals and other natural objects as you find them. Fallen trees and deadwood are valuable wildlife habitats so please do not remove or damage them. Respect what you find, such as heritage artefacts, such as old walls and structures, or property such as farming and forestry equipment. Take only photos, drawings, and memories.

6. Dispose of Waste Properly

Plan your visit to reduce rubbish and repack food into recyclable containers. Take everything you brought with you home again and dispose of it properly when you get there. Please do not dispose of any liquids into any watercourses as you may inadvertently pollute that source. Disposal of toilet waste in the wrong place can contaminate water, damage the environment and is culturally offensive. Use toilets where available. Otherwise, bury human waste in a shallow hole at least 30 metres away from water sources, but take toilet paper and hygiene products with you. Dog faeces can also be harmful to both humans and wildlife. Dog waste should be collected into bags and disposed of in an appropriate bin or brought home for disposal. Wherever possible, pick up any litter you see, it may encourage others to do the same.

7. Minimise the Effects of Fire

When visiting Ireland's outdoors it's important to remember that fires are not permitted in many national parks and protected woodland areas. Given the potentially destructive impact of fires on the environment, wildlife habitats and even livelihoods, we ask all recreational users to apply significant caution to the use of fire during recreation. These are the following questions to ask yourself before lighting a fire:

- Ask yourself if you really need a fire.
- Check local regulations and ensure you have permission.
- Know current environmental conditions e.g. weather warnings.
- Have the skills to minimise the effects of fire.
- Where fires are permitted, use a portable stove and protect the soil.
- Assess the wind, weather, location and wood availability.
- Keep your fire small, never leave unattended and ensure it is out completely before you leave.