

By practicing the Tread Lightly! principles you not only protect the outdoors but you protect access to recreation opportunities for years to come.

Tread Lightly!® is a national nonprofit organization with a mission to proactively protect recreation access and opportunities in the outdoors through ethics education and stewardship initiatives. Not only is Tread Lightly! the nation's signature ethics message for outdoor enthusiasts that use motorized vehicles while enjoying the outdoors, Tread Lightly! offers unique training and restoration programs strategically designed to instill an ethic of responsibility in a wide variety of outdoor enthusiasts and the industries that serve them.

- T**RAVEL RESPONSIBLY
- R**ESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS
- E**DUcate YOURSELF
- A**VOID SENSITIVE AREAS
- D**O YOUR PART



To learn more contact Tread Lightly! at  
Phone: 800-966-9900  
Email: [treadlightly@treadlightly.org](mailto:treadlightly@treadlightly.org)  
Or visit us on the web at [www.treadlightly.org](http://www.treadlightly.org)

Download *The Tread Lightly! Guide to Responsible Personal Watercraft Use* for more useful information for riding in the great outdoors at [www.treadlightly.org](http://www.treadlightly.org).

Thanks to our partners!



# PERSONAL WATERCRAFT



**TREAD LIGHTLY!'S**  
RESPONSIBLE RECREATION TIPS

## TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY

Travel responsibly on designated waterways and launch your watercraft in designated areas.

- ✔ Travel only in areas open to your personal watercraft (PWC)
- ✔ Always wear a Coast Guard approved lifejacket (PFD).
- ✔ When riding make sure your lanyard is attached to your PFD, wrist, or clothing.
- ✔ Always maintain your PWC at a safe speed.
- ✔ If you fall off your PWC, always reboard from the rear.
- ✔ Keep an eye out for other boaters, objects, and swimmers.
- ✔ Never jump a wake.
- ✔ If crossing a wake, cross at lower speeds and keep a close lookout for skiers and towables.
- ✔ Comply with all signs and barriers. This includes speed limits, no-wake zones, and underwater obstructions.
- ✔ Make every effort to ride with a partner, even if that person is on a different kind of watercraft.
- ✔ Do not attempt to ride at night. PWCs are not equipped with lights.
- ✔ Make certain your trailer lights work and your PWC is secure on the trailer before you travel to your destination.
- ✔ Balance your load including items stowed inside your PWC.

## RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Respect the rights of others including anglers, swimmers, skiers, boaters, divers and others to allow them to enjoy their recreational activities undisturbed.

- ✔ Show consideration to all recreationists on and around waterways.
- ✔ Be courteous to other boaters while in boat ramp areas. Launch and retrieve your PWC as quickly as possible.
- ✔ Keep the noise down—especially around the shore.
- ✔ Do not idly ride around near beaches, picnicking areas, campgrounds, and shoreline residences.
- ✔ If crossing private property, be sure to ask permission from the landowner(s).

## EDUCATE YOURSELF

Educate yourself by learning rules and regulations, planning for your trip, taking recreation skills classes, and knowing how to use and operate your equipment safely.

- ✔ Obtain charts of your destination and determine which areas are open to your type of travel.
- ✔ Make a realistic plan, and stick to it. Always tell someone of your travel plans.
- ✔ Contact the land manager for area restrictions, closures, and permit requirements.
- ✔ Check the weather forecast for your destination. Plan clothing, equipment and supplies accordingly. Make sure you have enough fuel and oil for the entire trip.
- ✔ Make sure your owner's manual and registration are on board in waterproof containers.
- ✔ Always carry a Coast Guard approved working fire extinguisher.
- ✔ Know your limitations. Apply sunscreen, drink lots of water, and watch your energy level.
- ✔ Prepare for the unexpected by packing necessary emergency items.
- ✔ Know distress signals and warning symbols.
- ✔ Take a PWC education course to learn more about negotiating waterways and safe and enjoyable PWC riding.
- ✔ Make sure your watercraft is mechanically up to task. Be prepared with tools, supplies, and a spill kit.

## AVOID SENSITIVE AREAS

Avoid sensitive areas and operating your watercraft in shallow waters or near shorelines at high speeds.

- ✔ Always launch at a designated boat ramp. Backing a vehicle on a riverbank or lakeshore can damage the area and leads to erosion.
- ✔ Always travel slowly in shallow waters and avoid riding in water less than 2½ feet deep. High speeds near shorelines

lead to large wakes which cause shoreline erosion.

- ✔ Sensitive areas to avoid include seasonal nesting or breeding areas.
- ✔ Avoid disturbing historical, archeological, and paleontological sites.
- ✔ Avoid “spooking” wildlife you encounter and keep your distance.
- ✔ Motorized and mechanized vehicles are not allowed in areas designated Wilderness.

## DO YOUR PART

Do your part by leaving the area better than you found it, properly disposing of fuel, oil and waste, avoiding the spread of invasive species, restoring degraded areas, and joining a local enthusiast organization.

- ✔ Pack out what you pack in.
- ✔ Carry a trash bag and pick up litter left by others.
- ✔ When fueling a water craft take every precaution not to spill into the water.
- ✔ Be prepared; carry a spill kit, which includes absorbent pads, socks, and booms.
- ✔ Use a fuel collar or bib when fueling to catch drips and overflow and prevent backplash.
- ✔ Observe proper sanitary waste disposal or pack your waste out.
- ✔ Following a trip wash your gear, PWC, and support vehicle to reduce the spread of invasive species. Make sure to remove all plant material from your PWC, motor, trailer, and other gear and dispose on dry land in a garbage container. Also drain livewells, bilge water, and transom wells at the boat launch prior to leaving.
- ✔ Don't mix PWCs with alcohol or drugs.

