

Back to Nature Green Cleaning, Good Stewardship

We love Sugar Island and the St. Lawrence River for its pristine environment, people free most of the year, beautiful plants, butterflies, fish, amphibians, reptiles and birds. The loons, great blue herons, mink and frogs are a joy to behold! Some species on the island and in the river are at risk or endangered or threatened such as the leopard frog. Thus, the 1000 Islands are in the Biosphere, a UNESCO designation.*

Speaking of a chemical free environment, how do we campers keep it that way? Many over the counter soaps have harmful chemicals that may affect the fragile ecosystems in the river and on land. We recommend using green products for washing which are environmentally friendly, biodegradable for soap and shampoo. These are available at grocery stores, camp supply stores, natural food stores, and online. Supermarkets have biodegradable shampoos.

Conservation practices in Canada prevent the decline of species which may be common now but not common if their habitat is threatened. They ask that you do not wash or rinse with soap or shampoo in the river. You can wash dishes and shampoo your hair thoroughly with some soap, and buckets on land.

SAFE SOAP

Safe cleaning agents include baking soda, lemon juice, and vinegar. Biodegradable, organic, and homemade are soaps with natural ingredients that can decompose over time and reduce environmental impact. But just because it says "biodegradable" on it does not mean it will dissolve in a stream with no side effects. A biodegradable soap is not necessarily safe to use around all water sources. These soaps degrade over time, but they require contact with soil to do so.

CLEANING DISHES,

Boiling water for at least 10 minutes does wonders to reduce the amount of soap needed for cleaning dishes. Before washing, scrape food particles off into the fire or a garbage bag so that the food will burn up and you won't risk attracting animals to your campsite. Waste food goes in the garbage not to animals. After washing your dishes, make sure to dispose of the water safely.

Disposing of Garbage and Dirty Water

Do not use the river for washing dishes; instead use your largest pot as a dishpan with a biodegradable, phosphate-free soap. It's vital to be at least 200 feet away from the river before dumping your dishwater. Pour wastewater in a shallow hole or move the bucket around so it is dispersed over a large patch of land.

The Sugar Island management plan includes conservation of natural resources. The Sugar Island Rules about Natural Habitat state: "Our first responsibility is to be good stewards of the island and to make sure that all of our users practice good stewardship."

Cleaning with environmentally products will have health benefits for you also!!

* This area represents a "tension zone" where many populations are at their southernmost or northernmost range. A notable example is the black rat snake, one of the nonpoisonous snakes of the area, Canada's largest reptile and a threatened species. The Upper St. Lawrence is home to a number of rare species as well as home to 31 species at risk.

*For more information:

- Frontenac Arch Biosphere <http://www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/>
- Parks Canada Species at Risk <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/amnc-nmca>
- St. Lawrence River <http://www.savetheriver.org/index.cfm?page=app.riverfacts>

- St. Lawrence Islands National Park <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/on/1000>
Ann Bramson's book Soap
www.wisegeek.org
www.grist.org
<https://www.thespruce.com/biodegradable-soap-for-camping-516581>
www.youtube.com :
www.MotherEarthNews.org