



# AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION

The **American Canoe Association (ACA)** is a member-based nonprofit organization (501(c)3) that promotes fun and responsible canoeing, kayaking, and rafting. Founded in 1880, the ACA actively advocates recreational access and stewardship of America's water trails. For more information and to become a member, visit [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org).



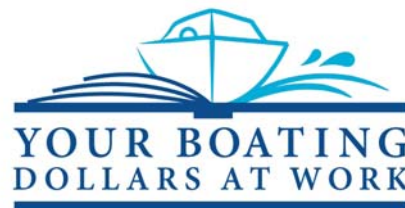
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[www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org)

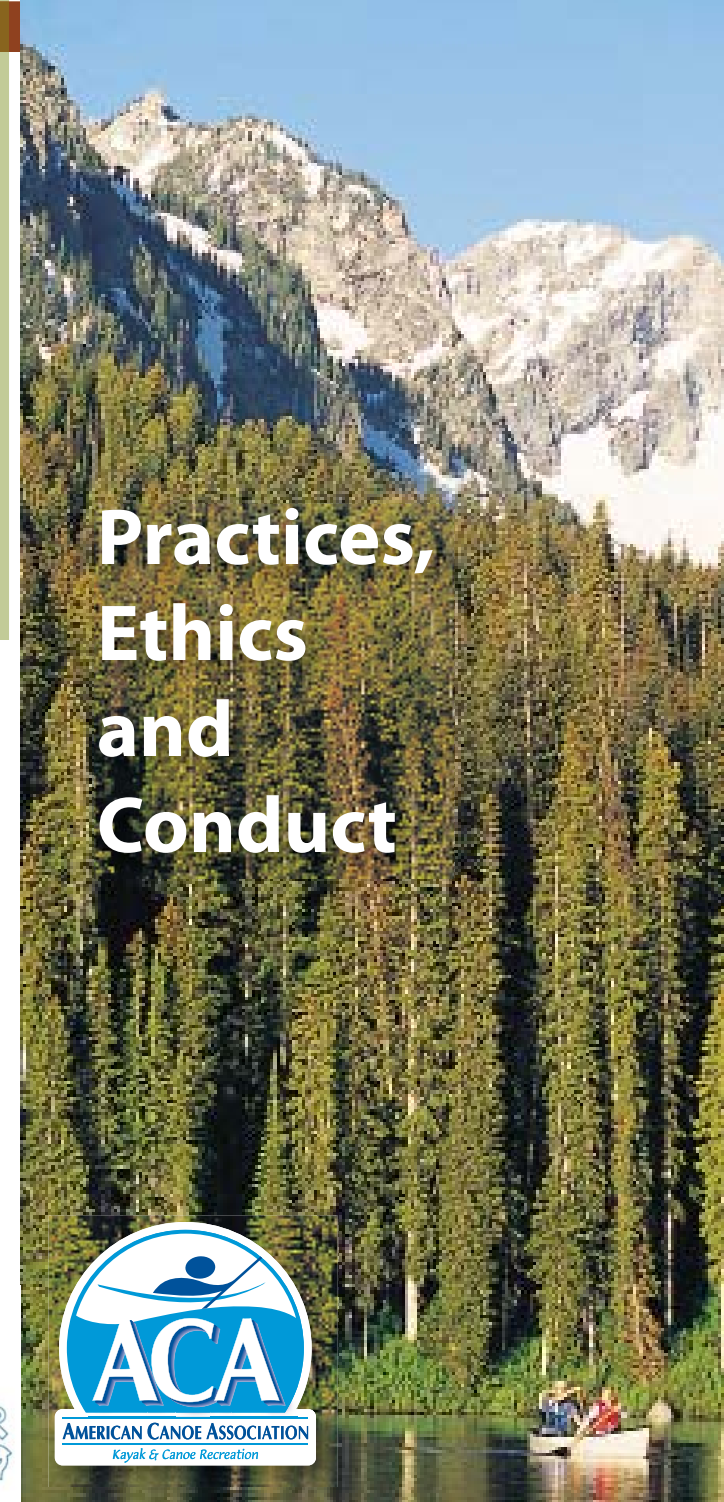
Making the world a better place to paddle. Since 1880.

## Environmental Ethics

- Never litter. Always pack out trash.
- Conduct all toilet activity at least 200 feet from any body of water (exact procedures vary dependent on the specific environmental characteristics of your paddling or camping location).
- Pack out human waste when in sensitive or heavily used environments.
- Do not disturb wildlife.
- Minimize impacts to shore when launching, portaging, scouting, or taking out.
- Avoid building campfires, except in established fire rings or in emergencies.
- Consult Leave No Trace ([www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)) and local resource managers for additional guidance.



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# Practices, Ethics and Conduct



Part of ACA's Paddle Safe, Paddle Smart Series

[www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org)



## Basic Safe Paddling Practices

**Always wear** a properly fitted lifejacket while on the water. As much as 85 percent of canoeing-related fatalities were not wearing a lifejacket at the time of the accident.

**Never go boating** while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Alcohol impairs judgment and good judgment is a critical component of paddling safely.

**Do not stand up** in a canoe or kayak, and avoid weight shifts that may cause capsize. Occupant movement and weight-shift factors in roughly half of all canoeing fatalities.

**Avoid weather** or water conditions beyond your skill level.

**Be able to effectively** steer and propel your boat.

**Never float or paddle** over a low-head (submerged) dam, fallen tree or other obstruction.

**Dress appropriate** to weather conditions (including air and water temperature).

**Do not paddle alone.**

### Know these Safety Skills

- Learn how to **self-rescue** in the event of capsize.
- Be proficient in **proper paddling technique** and learn to read the water.
- Only take on challenges for which you are physically and mentally **prepared**.
- Learn rescue skills** necessary to assist others.

**Inform others** (friends, family, resource manager) of your trip plan.

**Carry a supply of food** and water adequate for your trip length.

**Learn your route** in advance, especially potential hazards. Identify hazards such as difficult rapids, low-head dams or upstream dam releases. Know where to go in case of emergency.

**Never overload the boat** with more weight or people than it is designed to safely accommodate.

**Plan for emergencies.**

## Standards of Conduct

By observing these standards of conduct, paddlers reduce the opportunity for conflicts that may result in reduced waterway access and burdensome regulations.

- Obey all rules and regulations
- Respect private property. Only use public lands and access points.
- Be considerate to others on the water
- Give fishermen a wide berth.
- Never change clothes in public view.
- Respect local culture and standards of conduct.
- Give back to the waterway.

