

What's the big problem?

Over six million people now live within a two hour drive of the shores of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. This leaflet is about an unpleasant problem caused by too many of us wandering about in the woods—the poop, wastewater and associated paper and “sanitary” products we leave behind. They spoil the beauty and relaxation we are seeking, and are a real health hazard.

The shoreline and islands of eastern Georgian Bay are very vulnerable, with their exposed granite bedrock and shallow soil cover.

There are some simple techniques and precautions which can help reduce the problem. Adopting them will not only improve your immediate enjoyment of backcountry camping but may prevent “carry out” policies being imposed on us:

- ◆ Use existing campsites if you can, and check to see if a privy or latrine is already installed
- ◆ If no privy is found, dig a cat hole—this leaflet tells you how
- ◆ Locate your cat hole at least 200 feet (60 m) from any shoreline or water
- ◆ Bag out your used toilet paper or bury it. Do not burn it
- ◆ Wash your hands.



Illustrations by Edward Deng

Low-impact camping

To learn more about ways of reducing harm to natural areas we suggest:

- ◆ The publications and website of the *Leave No Trace* organization, www.LNT.org
- ◆ *The Boundary Waters Canoe Area* website, www.canocountry.com/ethics
- ◆ And for the last word on the subject, try the books of Kathleen Meyer, published by Ten Speed Press, www.tenspeed.com or kathleeninthewoods.com

This leaflet was made possible thanks to the help and support of the following organizations:



The Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Culture, receives \$100 million annually from Ontario's charity casino initiative.



Mountain Equipment Coop, Toronto



*White Squall Paddling Centre
Nobel, Ontario.*



The Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association supports a voluntary ban on campfires in the eastern Georgian Bay area.



<http://glska.freehostia.com>

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The scoop on poop!

How to answer the call of nature in the wild



Intestinal parasites

Giardia lamblia and cryptosporidium are always unpleasant, and occasionally fatal. They are transmitted as microscopic cysts when infected feces comes into contact with water. Today no freshwater in North America can be considered safe, no matter how cold and clear it appears or how remote. To protect yourself and others:

- ◆ Make sure your cat holes or latrines are at least 200 feet (60 m) away from shorelines, streams or ponds.
- ◆ Wash your hands after going to the toilet.
- ◆ Do not drink untreated water from lakes or streams.

Bears do it, so why can't I?

Yes, the No. 1 problem is poop. One good solution is a campsite already furnished with a latrine (also known as a privy, thunder box, back country outhouse or pit toilet). These useful structures are found in backcountry areas and national and provincial parks. They are placed there by the park operators, or by groups such as kayakers or cottagers. They are simple devices, but there is a right way and a wrong way to use them!

Pamper that privy!



For obvious reasons, privies are not always easily found. They are placed away from the tenting areas and may be hidden by trees: look for a trail heading into the bush and away from the water. The privy is usually just a sturdy box with a hole cut in the top—luxury versions may have

a toilet seat. It will have been placed on soil, over a hole dug to at least 8 inches (20 cm) deep.

The soil's organic ingredients will over time bio-degrade and break down the deposits. Usually no chemicals are used to speed up this process, so any help you can give the privy will be appreciated.

- ◆ Toilet paper breaks down slowly in the absence of running water. Bagging this stuff and carrying it out is a chore, but the privy will work much better.
- ◆ Do not throw sanitary products, disposable diapers, food scraps, peelings, food packaging or garbage of any kind into the privy.
- ◆ Carry these items out or if allowed, burn them in your campfire. Bears and other animals are not too fussy to investigate, wrecking the privy—and then they may wander into your camp.

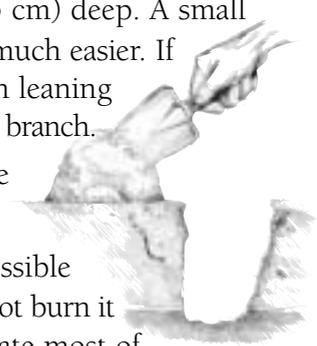
Can't find a privy?

If you can't find a privy then a "cat hole" is needed. If you have been looking for a privy, then you have probably



already found a good place for your cat hole. To make a cat hole:

- ◆ Find a secluded spot at least 200 feet (60 m) away from the shore, marshes or any watercourses.
- ◆ Dig a hole about 6 inches (15 cm) deep. A small plastic shovel makes this job much easier. If possible locate the hole within leaning distance of a rock or sturdy tree branch.
- ◆ Do your business then replace the earth and leaves.
- ◆ Use as little toilet paper as possible and bag it out, or bury it. Do not burn it in place! True, this will eliminate most of the paper, but a fire could result which might eliminate most of your campsite.
- ◆ Before leaving the spot, use a hand-sanitizing gel or wash your hands with a squirt of water from a water-bottle and a disinfectant soap.



For group camps the best solution is to turn the cat hole into a "cat trench". Just extend the hole lengthways into a trench. Mark the site, perhaps with branches, and tell your group about it. Cover where needed after each use. This prevents a heavily-used campsite becoming "land-mined" all over with nasty traps for the unwary! This is not so funny when you consider that the contents of a cat hole can take a year or more to become part of the landscape.

Here's some relief!

The good news is that most urine is sterile and does not harm plants or soil. But it can smell, especially if concentrated in one place. So be polite and step away from the camp and if possible, find a rocky surface.

This leaflet was produced by the Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association, a partner in the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council.