



LEAVE NO TRACE when riding mountain bikes in Australia's South West

The South West Eco Region of Western Australia has been recognised by Conservation International as one of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots due to its unique and abundant variety of species, many of them endemic and threatened.

It is currently under siege by a number of threatening processes. The most serious, to which almost half of Australian flora species are susceptible, is *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (*Phytophthora dieback*) – a soil-borne organism causing root-rot disease. It spreads through the transference of affected soil and invades plant roots and stems, virtually going unnoticed until dead foliage is seen. The vegetation loss is a major distress to plant biodiversity and destroys the unique habitat critical to many mammal and bird species.

We spread dieback by transporting mud in our boots, tyre treads and other gear. With some places already severely impacted, the South West eco region relies on our stewardship to maintain, and hopefully restore, its health.

It is critical that individuals and groups who ride mountain bikes in the South West adhere to the following seven Leave No Trace Principles that apply to mountain bike riding.

Help protect the environment you ride in, so we can continue to enjoy our wilderness tomorrow and into the future.

1. Plan ahead and prepare

- Ring ahead or jump on the net to check if you can ride in the area you are visiting. Some parks may prevent bike riders on some trails.
- In the South West region of Western Australia *Phytophthora dieback* is seriously impacting biodiversity values:
 - i) know where infected and uninfected areas are so you can practice good hygiene – preferably dry brush your tyres; and
 - ii) carry a spray bottle of methylated spirits and spray tyres to kill the pathogen.
- Improve your riding skills so that you reduce your impact on the trail. Always look in the direction you want to travel so you don't visit fragile land unintentionally.



- Check the weather report for the area in which you intend to ride and bring along the appropriate clothing.
- Check your bike before your ride and carry a repair kit.
- Wash tyres regularly to reduce spread of plant disease.

2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces

- When riding single-track, stay in single file – do not create new tracks.
- Avoid cutting corners – don't widen tracks.
- If the ground is boggy, try to ride through mud to prevent trail width expansion.
- If very muddy, avoid the area completely and negotiate a different course.
- Stay on durable surfaces such as rock outcrops, sand or gravel.

3. Dispose of waste properly

- “Pack it in, pack it out” – stock up on energy bars and hydrating drinks but make sure you have a small zip-lock bag or a stuff sack to carry all of your wrappers out.
- Human waste must be buried 100 ml deep and 100 meters from water sources and 50 meters from tracks.

4. Leave what you find

- Leave rocks, fallen branches, plants and other natural objects as you find them. They provide homes for animals and insects.
- Clean your tyres and bike regularly to prevent the spread of Phytophthora dieback and seeds from invasive plants.

5. Minimise campfire impacts

- Contact your local fire authority and check whether there is a total fire ban.
- If you are out overnight use a portable stove for cooking in preference to an established fire ring.
- Clean campfire rings after use – and pack out residue.
- Pack your cigarette butts into a small film canister or into your zip-lock bag.

6. Respect for wildlife



- If you come across wildlife on the bike trail, stop, observe from a distance and allow it to move on. Be aware of their habitat and respect it by leaving it alone.

7. Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors

- Often we share the trails with other recreational users, so be respectful and stop to let walkers or other riders pass on narrow trails.
- When taking a break, move off the trail and rest on a durable surface – avoid crushing fragile vegetation.