

# Policy: 'Leave No Trace' in Monhegan Associates' Wildlands

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*This policy acknowledges that the Monhegan Associates Bylaws are the governing document for all Monhegan Associates activities. With that in mind, this policy supersedes all prior policies or statements specifically related to the contents of this document.*

## Purpose

The objective of this policy is to set forth Monhegan Associates' goal of, wherever possible, leaving no trace of human activity in the Island's wild-lands. To further that end this policy defines MAI's position on unauthorized alterations to its property and defines an action plan to gather data, educate the public, and protect nature by teaching and inspiring people to enjoy it responsibly.

## Scope

Given that some people are tempted to improve nature for their pleasure or to suit their perceived needs we anticipate that the effort to change behavior will be incremental. This policy will be in effect for three years, after which time the trustees will evaluate the results of these efforts and if necessary redefine their goals. This process could continue until the desired outcome is achieved.

## Policy

### Definitions:

- **MAI** - Monhegan Associates Inc.
- **Wildlands:** Any property outside the village owned by - the Monhegan Associates, Inc.

- **Unauthorized alterations:** Any changes to the natural landscape purposely made by people on MAI property, without permission of MAI.

## Policy Statement:

In the Certificate of Organization for MAI, it states that one objective of the organization is *“to preserve for posterity the natural wild beauty, biotic communities, and desirable natural, artificial, and historic features of the so-called “wildlands” portions of Monhegan Island, Maine, and its environs, as well as the simple, friendly way of life that has existed on Monhegan as a whole.”*

In keeping with this objective, MAI states that it is incumbent on visitors to the wildlands to “leave no trace” as they enjoy this natural wild beauty on privately owned property. This would include not building fairy houses, stone structures, or making other *unauthorized alterations* or leaving non native artifacts in the *wildlands*.

## Implementation

Over a three-year period, MAI will implement a program aimed at educating the public to “leave no trace” of human activity in the wildlands and, specifically, at reducing the number of *unauthorized alterations* on its property, including those beside the trails and along the shoreline.

This effort will include data collection and an initiative, explaining to the public that such constructions run counter to the Associates’ charter.

## Data Collection

Periodically during high season (Memorial Day – Labor Day) volunteers will walk Cathedral Woods trail and the Island’s perimeter trail and other areas as necessary, documenting the number and type of *unauthorized alterations* found. These results will help us determine if we are being

successful in limiting the impact of unauthorized structures. (Directions and data sheet in Appendix.)

## Removal

After recording the appropriate data, volunteers will be authorized to collect any building materials and as far as possible return them to their natural state. The intent of removal is that at the end of three years, there will have been a decrease in the number of *unauthorized structures* being built. Based on the data collected Monhegan Associates can determine if further actions are necessary.

## Public Information Initiative

- MAI will ask the owners of summer ferries to Monhegan to make an MAI-provided announcement asking visitors to leave rocks, plants, and other natural objects as they found them: to leave no trace.
- MAI will post signs at the dock, on the Rope Shed, the MAI cart, and at the entrance to Cathedral Woods reminding visitors to leave the wild-lands as they found them.

## Internal References

The following MAI references were used to craft this policy:

- Miller, Mark. Monhegan Forest: Stewardship Management Plan, January 2005
- Monhegan Associates, Inc. 2016 Stewardship Management Plan, Draft 8-13-16

## External References

- “The Seven Principles”, Leave No Trace: Center for Outdoor Ethics  
<https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>

## Rational

To date, other than by word-of-mouth, MAI has not had a policy related to the intent to preserve Monhegan’s natural wild beauty as stated in the Certificate of Organization. This policy clarifies the intent of the organization in meeting this goal.

People taking advantage of the natural beauty of Monhegan’s wildlands should be aware that they are on private property under the stewardship of Monhegan Associates, Inc. and need to respect the authority of the MAI to oversee this.

## Appendix

Leave No Trace Volunteer Directions  
Leave No Trace Collection Sheet

## **VOLUNTEERS: REMOVAL DIRECTIONS**

Thank you for volunteering to assist in implementing Monhegan Associates' policy of, wherever possible, leaving no trace of human activity in the wildlands - which includes the respectful removal of unauthorized structures along the Cathedral Woods Trail and Trail #1 and other locations as deemed necessary. As this has historically been a controversial topic, it is critical that there be some common understandings. Please adhere to our requests. Read the following and consider it "training":

### **CORE UNDERSTANDINGS**

- The wildlands of Monhegan Island are privately owned by and under the stewardship of the Monhegan Associates, Inc.
- Monhegan Associates encourages all people to enjoy the natural beauty of its property, leaving rocks, plants, and other natural objects as they found them.
- Monhegan Associates has discouraged visitors from building structures along or near its trails.
- With the new Leave No Trace policy taking effect, MAI will begin a more proactive approach to the removal of unauthorized structures, with the premise that the fewer unauthorized structures people see the less likely they will be to disturb the natural areas.
- Volunteers will collect data about the unauthorized structures they remove in order to enhance the organization's understanding of the challenge.

### **PROCEDURE**

- 1) To identify yourself as an authorized Monhegan Associates volunteer tasked with the removal, please carry authorization from MAI.
- 2) Take the data sheet, the bag/basket to assist with removing the materials, and a basic "educational" information sheet to share with visitors who may ask what you are doing.
- 3) Please plan to walk the path either before 9 am or after 4 pm in order to minimize our presence.
- 4) As you encounter each structure, record your findings on the data collection sheet before dismantling. If live mosses have been used, if possible, please try to "replant" them in a spot where they might have a shred of a chance at survival. Otherwise, collect all the construction materials in the basket/bag and scatter them off the trail in a respectful manner. Try to make the disbursement look as natural as possible. No dumping, please. Along the shore: return stones or driftwood to appear as natural as possible.
- 5) Should you find any materials that are not part of the ecosystem (coins, seashells, etc), please gather them up and take them with you.
- 6) When finished, please return the data sheets to (TBD).

Thank you for helping MAI complete its mission of keeping the MAI wildlands in its natural state. Your efforts are much appreciated.

Leave No Trace DATA COLLECTION SHEET      Date \_\_\_\_\_

Recorded by \_\_\_\_\_ Return to: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Structures Removed (Tally and total.) <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;">Total _____</div>
Number of Structures Using Live Materials Used: Ground/log growing moss _____ Total _____ Spanish Moss _____ Total _____ Live branches _____ Total _____
Number of Structures Over Eight Inches (Tally. Then write total.) <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;">Total _____</div>
Number of Structures with Materials from Outside the Forest Shells _____ Total _____ Bottle caps _____ Total _____ Feathers _____ Total _____ Small Toys _____ Total _____ Other _____ Total _____
Number of Structures Already in Deteriorated State (Tally and total) <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;">Total _____</div>