

Take a hike this summer, but don't forget to bring Emily Post along with you. (Yes, there is etiquette on the trail, too!)

The following tips, courtesy of Elizabeth Bassett, author of *Nature Walks in Northern Vermont and the Champlain Valley* will keep our trails beautiful and add to your hiking enjoyment.



Hike in small groups, six or less is a good guideline. You will be more sensitive to vulnerable vegetation, trail conditions, and other hikers.

- Park in designated spaces, off the road, leaving any gates or barriers as you found them.
- Respect signage for fragile ecosystems, nesting of rare or endangered birds, and other vulnerable habitats.
- Take only pictures, leave only footprints. (A cliché perhaps, but one worth heeding.)
- If you pack it in, pack it out. (This includes **all** personal hygiene items and any waste not buried.)
- Pick up litter left by others.
- Don't pick wildflowers, carve initials in trees, or in any way diminish the trail.
- Stay on the trail and do not shortcut.
- Don't hike on muddy trails, especially in spring and late fall. If a trail is so sodden that you must walk beside it, turn back. Go to a lower elevation.
- Pets are best left at home. Where animals are welcome they should be under control at all times.
- Be especially respectful of any private property you may cross.

And for safety's sake.

Make a plan: Read about your route, look at a map, check the weather forecast, leave

adequate time for mishaps, and make sure someone knows where you are.

Safety will be enhanced by proper maps and a compass. Cell phones should be used only for serious emergencies.

Be properly equipped. Choose appropriate clothing and footwear for climate and conditions. Carry an emergency kit—for others if not for yourself. Knowledge of basic first aid is always a plus.

Our thanks to:

Elizabeth Bassett, author of *Nature Walks in Northern Vermont and the Champlain Valley*, published by AMC (Appalachian Mountain Club) Books of Boston in 1998. You can purchase her book at: www.flyingpigbooks.com