



Myakka River State Park

April 2019



Leave No Trace

“Leave No Trace” is a concept that became relevant in the environmental world when outdoor recreation significantly increased in the 1960’s. As visitation and recreation in natural areas increased, habitats began to suffer. Visitors to these natural areas lacked ethical guidelines and were unaware of their environmental impact. In response, a collaboration of governmental, educational, scientific, and nonprofit agencies created the Leave No Trace (LNT) guidelines.

Today they are known as the 7 LNT principles. These principles are based on research, and they can be applied to all recreational activities in natural environments. At Myakka River State Park, the 7 LNT principals are very crucial to the balance between recreation and conservation.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

At Myakka, there are tons of different adventures, including day hikes, camping, paddling, and more. Before embarking on your adventure, check for special/seasonal regulations on the park website, look at weather forecasts, pack proper equipment, and make sure your navigation materials are sufficient. Ensure that you do not have to use or damage natural growth to make your adventure successful. It will be more fun, too!

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

This park has some of the most unique and endangered ecosystems including Blackwater Stream and Florida Dry Prairie. It is vitally important to keep our impact minimal. Myakka has over 40 miles of hiking trails, which bicyclists should not utilize. We have many off-road trails that are open to bicyclists, but they should not be ridden by motorized vehicles. When hiking and biking, we ask visitors to stay on the trail to avoid stepping on fragile plants or even a gopher tortoise burrow. Also, we have designated campsites on durable areas. Camping is only permitted in designated areas.

3. Dispose of Waste Properly

Pack it in, pack it out. We support this principle in the park by keeping trash receptacles in high use areas, but we depend on our visitors to help us by holding on to their trash until they can dispose of it. This even goes for apple cores and orange peels! Did you know that it can take up to 2 years for these items to fully break down? In addition, these food scraps can add foreign nutrients to the environment, attract wildlife, and change their behavior.

4. Leave What You Find

On a typical hike in Myakka you can find beautiful wildflowers, remnants of wildlife, and other natural wonders. Findings like these make Myakka so special, and you should leave them behind for other visitors to view. These items are also vital to the ecosystem; removing them disturbs natural habitats.

“Leave it as it is... the ages have been at work on it and only man can mar it.” - Theodore Roosevelt

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts

In addition to the threat of wildfires, campfires built outside of designated areas can leave lasting impacts on the environment (even if it's small!). All campsites have established fire rings and all picnic areas have grills. Keep your fires small or consider using camp stoves and lanterns as an alternative.

6. Respect Wildlife

Spectacular wildlife viewing in the park must be done from a distance. If you hike out on Powerline or to Deep Hole, observe the alligators and birds from a distance. They won't become stressed, and you can see them behave naturally. To ensure the safety of the wildlife, we also prohibit feeding and require that pets remain on a leash.

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

The beauty and excitement of Myakka can be experienced in many ways including hiking, paddling, birding, picnicking, jogging, fishing, biking, and wildlife viewing. Visitors not only share the park, they share the experience, so it is important to be courteous to others. As you enjoy the park, make room on the trail, keep your group size small, and let nature's sounds prevail.

Last year, we had over 380,000 visitors. With this many people, it is crucial that we all do our part to protect these unique ecosystems and species we find here in Myakka. Next time you come visit the park or choose to explore elsewhere, practice these Leave No Trace principles; help us to ensure ethical recreation, habitat protection, and safety to all who inhabit the land.

To our deer little fawn,

Welcome to the world! We've been eagerly awaiting your arrival. We watched as your dad grew incredible antlers and tussled for dominance the other males. We watched your mom's belly grow larger and larger by the day. And now, you're finally here! You're about to take your first shaky steps and smell fresh spring flowers, growing and blooming along with you.

This world can be a beautiful and dangerous place. Stay curled up, lying down in the leaves. Mom will **always** be close, but she will not stay next to you enough to leave her scent. You don't have a scent yet, and this helps you hide from potential predators. Smart humans will know **never** to approach or touch you, even if you seem injured or ill. They don't want to scare Mommy away or attract predators with their scents.



In a few months, you'll start losing your spots and foraging along with your mom. There are so many grasses at Myakka to taste and pick your favorite! Foraging will be mostly at dawn and dusk. Sometimes, we will burn areas of the park. This makes sure that grasses can grow healthily, and the Dry Prairie can remain the second-most biodiverse ecosystem in North America. What does this biodiversity mean for you? LOTS OF YUMMY PLANTS!



You're going to stay with your mom for about 18 months. In this time, she (and other deer) will be giving you some important signs when danger is present. Snorting and pawing the ground with a front foot means the deer is nervous. Pay close attention. If a nearby deer's tail pops up and starts shaking side-to-side, RUN! Your soon-to-be strong, agile legs are great defenses.

These signs are usually from alligators, bobcats, coyotes, and humans. Even though it is illegal for humans to bother, feed, or hunt you in the park, you should always remain cautious of your predators. Never take food from a human; it's probably not a part of your natural diet and it can create a deadly habit for you. Be careful when you drink water from a pond; there might be an unseen alligator lurking.

Despite the dangers, this world is a wonderful place, full of grasses, playtime, running, and everything else you love to do. We will love watching you grow, standing far away with our cameras, eager to see you flourish. We promise to help protect you, educating visitors about you and keeping your habitat healthy.

With love,
MRSP's Rangers

It's the Moon Over Myakka Concert Series 2019 Finale

The Chillbillies

April 19, 2019
7:00 p.m.
South Pavilion

This local country rocking blues band has been playing together since 2004. The Chillbillies play all kinds of music from oldies, classic country, new country, southern rock, classic rock to originals. Come see: Bain Beakley & Tommy Troglen on vocals & guitar, Taylor Collins on bass and Tim Dodge on vocals & drums. Look for a few special guests also!



Cost: \$20 per person (\$15 for Friends members). Park entrance fee waived for concert if you arrive after 5 p.m. Purchase tickets here: <https://www.friendsofmyakkariver.org/events>. Tickets will also be sold at Ranger Station on the day of the concert. If you purchase tickets online, please bring a printout as internet service within the park can be unreliable.

If you are a member of the Friends, simply enter your email in to the promo code and your discount will appear. If you are not yet a member, please consider joining! More about membership here: <https://www.friendsofmyakkariver.org/membership>

At the concert, we will pull the winner of our kayak drawing! For more information on how you can win a brand-new Santee Sport 126, visit this website:

<https://www.friendsofmyakkariver.org/news/myakka-river-kayak-drawing-of-chance>

For more information about the Friends of Myakka River State Park, Chillbillies concert, membership, or kayak, call 941-373-7839.