

SIMPLE WAYS TO DO THE RIGHT THING

Leave No Trace Means Going Gently

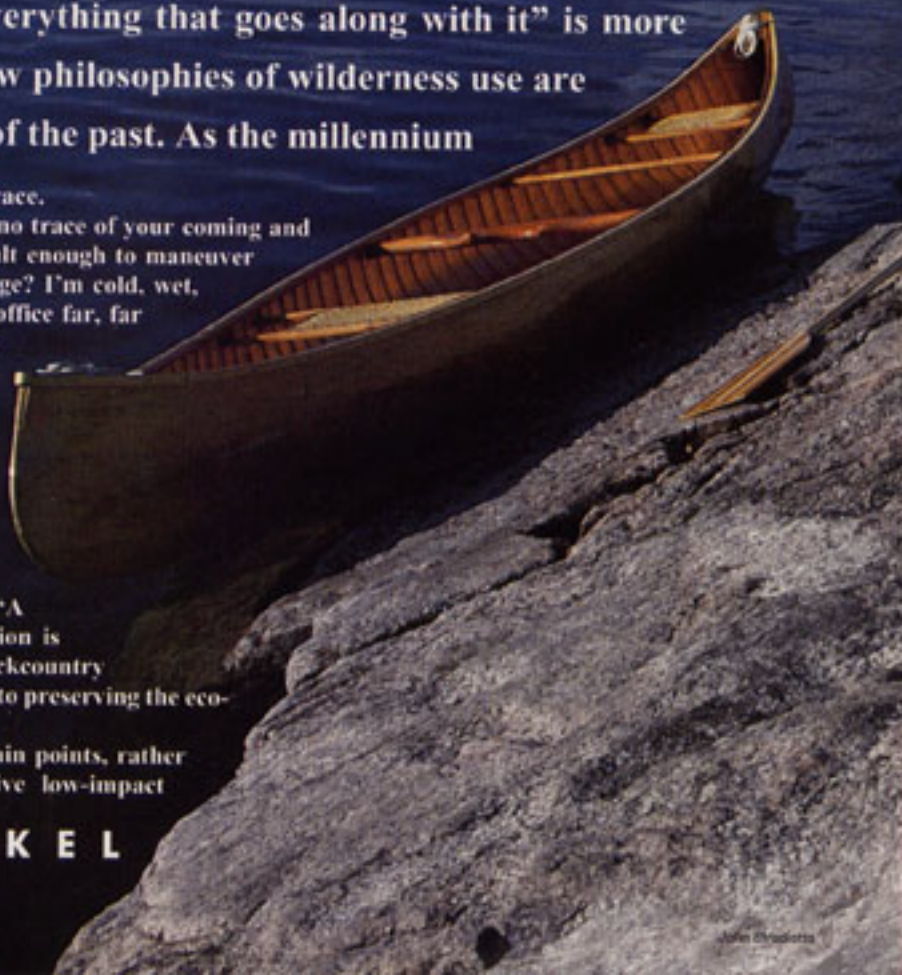
If you're new to paddling, whether it be kayak touring, canoeing, or whitewater paddling, everything that goes along with it is also probably new. And sometimes it may seem that "everything that goes along with it" is more difficult than the sport itself. New philosophies of wilderness use are replacing the simplistic slogans of the past. As the millennium

approaches, we are all learning to Leave No Trace.

For beginning campers, admonitions to leave no trace of your coming and going may feel like a burden: "Wasn't it difficult enough to maneuver my heavily laden kayak through that awful gorge? I'm cold, wet, tired, and hungry, and now some agency in an office far, far away expects me to 'take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints'? What I really want is a big fire and a soft place to pitch my tent. Forget about the consequences."

Actually, the precepts of Leave No Trace, as outlined by the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), under the direction of the U.S. Forest Service and other federal land-use agencies, recognize that all backcountry campers and situations aren't the same. According to NOLS, "A basic tenet of the LNT program is that education is more effective than regulation in modifying backcountry visitors' behavior, and therefore education is key to preserving the ecological health of our wildlands."

With LNT, attitude and awareness are the main points, rather than rules and regulations. To be an effective low-impact



BY PETER STEKEL