



Littering Has Far Reaching Effects

By Jerome Hansen

I recently visited Spring Valley Reservoir east of Moscow. This pristine little reservoir nestled in the upper portion of Spring Valley Creek, provides hours of fishing and camping entertainment for families and friends.

We were saddened by the amount of trash scattered from shore to shore. Someone had emptied an ashtray right in the middle of one of the parking areas. Fire rings were filled with trash. Empty worm containers, beer bottles and cans floated near the edge of the reservoir. Unfortunately, this scene is played out throughout the state of Idaho.

Littering is a serious problem on many Idaho Fish and Game properties across the state. In addition to being an eyesore, litter can be hazardous to wildlife. Squirrels and other animals can get their head trapped in aluminum cans. Fishing line can entangle osprey and ducks so badly they can't move. Sometimes animals eat litter thinking its food. Wild animals can be choked by plastic six-pack rings.

So why do people litter? I went to the Internet to explore this question and found an interesting article by a gentleman named Alan Bisbort. He reports that Keep America Beautiful,

a national nonprofit organization, has studied litter and littering for the past 47 years. More than anything else, the organization says that it's just apathy.

A national study conducted by the group in 1999 showed that 75 percent of Americans interviewed admitted to littering in the past five years. Yet 89 percent saw tossing out trash while driving was absolutely wrong.

One professor of environmental psychology from Knox College in Illinois has studied littering for many years. He says that people litter for the simple reason that it is the easiest way to get rid of unwanted things.

He also found the following: Young people litter more than older people, men litter more than women, people living in rural areas litter more than urban residents, and people who are alone litter more than people in groups. He also points to studies that show bird watchers, nature walkers and canoeists litter very little, while hunters, fishermen, campers, motor-boaters and water-skiers litter a lot.

Ouch! Did anyone wince a little?

A psychologist at Weber State says that those who litter, do more than show a casual disregard for the environment. For many, littering may provide a means of asserting personal freedom, setting territory and even soothing fears. People may mark the wilderness to make it less threatening. The psychologist thinks that littering in the wilderness may in part be a deeply embedded, "ancient" need to establish territory.

Fish and Game provides trash cans and dumpsters at many boat ramps and fishing lakes. Even with the availability of trash receptacles, many access sites are still magnets for litter, and we spend much time and money managing litter and trash.

Most regions in the state have had great success with a strict "pack it in, pack it out" approach at access sites and fishing lakes, alleviating the need for trash cans and dumpsters.

Less money spent on litter and trash cleanup will mean more money available for cleaner toilets, better docks and better access to hunting and fishing areas.

So if you bring it, please don't fling it.

Jerome Hansen is the regional supervisor in the Magic Valley Region. He wrote this article while working in the Clearwater Region.



Litter can be a hazard to wildlife. IDFG photo by Martin Koenig

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Fighting Combat Fishing Issues with Courtesy

By Scott Putnam

Aldo Leopold once wrote, "A peculiar virtue in wildlife ethics is that the hunter ordinarily has no gallery to applaud or disapprove of his conduct. Whatever his acts, they are dictated by his own conscience, rather than a mob of onlookers."

Obviously, Leopold was not a Clearwater River angler. One Saturday in November several years ago, more than 50 boats were crowded on a two-mile section of the lower river. In Aldo's defense, he did use the qualifier "ordinarily."

While steelhead fishing continues to improve and more people discover these magnificent fish, it is a safe bet that our rivers will get more boating pressure.

As a bank angler, drift boat owner and a jet boat pilot, I have witnessed what can only be described as "combat fishing" on several occasions. This generally takes the form of being inconsiderate while operating watercraft or encroaching into another angler's fishing spot.

Ethics are a constantly evolving set of personal beliefs that are unique to a person. Armed with a few ethics, we can combat "combat fishing." Here is a short list of ideas for consideration. Feel free to pick through these and apply them to your personal code of fishing ethics.

Keep in mind, though, that many of these depend on water conditions. Consequently, some may not be practical or safe in certain river environments.

- Choose to observe and obey all boating regulations. Understand and practice safe boating.
- Prepare your boat and trailer before



With a little courtesy, bank and boat anglers can share popular fishing holes.

IDFG photo

you are on the ramp so you can launch quickly. Likewise, clear the ramp area before you unload.

- Be conscious of your boat's wake, especially around anchored boats and wading anglers.
- Jet boats need to be "on top," or near full speed, to skim over shallow water. In addition, they are often restricted to traveling through narrow channels, especially during low water. Give them room.
- Trollers or drifters should not run their boats too close to other trollers, drifters or bank anglers to avoid snagging or cutting off lines. As a rule of thumb, stay at least 50 yards from other boats or bank anglers.

of room. Don't encroach into their spot. Allow the first person fishing a small section of water to finish it ahead of you. As in golf, let the leading group play through the hole before entering their space.

- Don't enter the water directly in front of someone already in the water.
- A slow moving or stationary angler has the right to remain where he or she is. Politely move around them.
- Yield to an angler with a fish on.

Generally, the correct solution to any ethics question is your answer to, "How would I want to be treated in this situation?"

I challenge you to consider your personal fishing ethics the next time you are on the water. Share them with your fishing companions. Use a discussion of fishing ethics to fill the time between your cries, "Fish On!"

With a little common courtesy and respect we can enjoy this wonderful resource together.

Scott Putnam is a fisheries biologist in the Clearwater Region.

(Watch for Fish and Game's YouTube video on fishing etiquette, coming soon.)

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- Boaters should always stay outside of bank anglers' casting distance if conditions allow this.

- Don't run your boat over the water that someone else is about to fish.

- Give your fellow anglers plenty



Want to Hunt on Private Land? Ask Permission First

By Clay Hickey

As an avid hunter and an Idaho Fish and Game employee who works closely with landowners every day, my experience in asking for and working with those who give permission to hunt has been considerable.

Over the years, I have experienced that there is clearly a right way and a wrong way to ask for the opportunity to hunt someone else's land.

Although there is no guarantee that you will receive permission to hunt, following the suggestions listed below will definitely increase your chances of obtaining permission to hunt from the landowner.

The first step is to be courteous and respectful. Common courtesy and good manners still go along way, especially in Idaho. Using yes sir, no sir, Mr., and Mrs. shows proper respect when speaking with someone you do not personally know. You will also greatly increase your opportunity to gain permission if you look like someone who is a responsible individual.

Whenever possible, ask the landowner in person rather than over the phone. People like to see who they are dealing with. In addition, it is always harder to tell someone no in person than it is to tell them no over the phone.

Also, the hunter who plans ahead and asks permission well in advance is usually welcome, while those who do not ask or wait until the day of the hunt, may not get the same kind of welcome.

Don't show up at a landowner's door at 6 a.m. on the day you want to go hunting and expect the landowner to allow you access.

It is usually best to contact a landowner at least a week before you want to hunt on their property. You probably also want to follow up a day or two before actually hunting just to make sure it is still okay to hunt there. This may seem bothersome to you, but landowners appreciate a thoughtful hunter.

But what if the landowner denies your request? Remember the landowner has the right to say no. It is his or her private property. Hunting private land

is a privilege granted to the hunter, not a right. Having fences cut or having hunters trespass on their property really sours landowners on all hunters. If hunters respect landowners and show their gratitude whether the answer is yes or no, they can establish relationships that both will appreciate.

Hunters who do get permission may exchange landowner/sportsmen courtesy cards with the landowner. The cards are free and available at Fish and Game offices. The cards communicate information, such as hunter name, phone number and vehicle description.

The two-part, pocket-sized booklet of six cards provides hunters with a handy way of exchanging essential information with landowners who, in turn, feel more secure knowing who's hunting on their property and how to contact them. Ask them if they want you to call or stop by before you go hunting, and if there will be other hunters out there.

Always remember to treat the landowner and his or her property with respect. Put yourself in the landowner's shoes. Remember, it is probably easier and less stressful for most landowners to close their property to hunting. If the landowner doesn't want you driving or hunting close to livestock then don't.

Driving through stubble fields with a low clearance vehicle can start a fire, and driving on wet roads can create a mess. Use their property, but leave it untouched.

Landowners, just like you, can get upset when they have livestock, buildings or property damaged from bullets or find litter strewn about their property. How would you feel if your neighbors emptied their garbage can in your driveway or shot out your living room window?

Gates should be left as you find them. If you are uncertain whether or not a gate should be open or closed, stop by and ask the landowner or leave them a note. Also, inform them of any suspicious activity on their property.

When done hunting, stop and thank the landowner for allowing you access and to let them know that you are done hunting. Often times, hunters will send a thank you card later or offer to donate a few hours of labor. While these practices are great and never hurt, treating the landowner's property with respect and offering a simple thank you when leaving is often enough.

Landowners can grant permission a number of ways, including face-to-face, by telephone, in writing or by posting signs that explain the type of hunting allowed and conditions that may apply.

Fish and Game provides property owners free signs that address the issue of respecting private property. The signs include "hunting by permission only," "road closed to vehicles," and "safety zone."

Clay Hickey is the wildlife biologist in the Clearwater Region.



IDFG photo

Littering Limits Hunter and Angler Access

With anglers lining the banks along many of Idaho's rivers, Idaho Fish and Game encourages all outdoor enthusiasts to make litter pick-up a part of their outdoor routine.

Trash left by hunters and anglers is one of the most common complaints heard from landowners. Fish and Game officers write more littering citations each year than any other kind.

Access to thousands of acres of public land and access to private land has been lost because some people don't clean up after themselves.

Fishing line is a major concern. Discarded fishing line left tangled in a tree or balled up on the shore can become a

trap for wildlife. Birds and other animals are killed or injured after becoming entangled in abandoned fishing line.

Leaving trash is not unique to fishing areas, but it also plagues areas alongside roadways, hiking trails, campgrounds, vehicle pullout areas – basically anywhere people go outdoors.

While most outdoor enthusiasts are good about taking their trash with them, it only takes a few leaving their mess to destroy an area for the rest.

"One of the most common reasons landowners don't allow hunters and anglers on their property is littering," Conservation Officer George Fischer said. "Yet people who spend a good deal of time outdoors have an important responsibility to protect wildlife."

Everyone can help protect the wildlife and environment they enjoy.

A few things to remember include:

- Pack out everything that is packed in.
- Leave gates the way they are found.
- Drive only on existing roads.
- Clean up targets and empty casings after shooting.

- Don't shoot on private lands, unless permission has been granted.
- Clean up other people's trash.
- Be responsible for your litter.
- Report people who litter.



Littering can mean loss of hunter and angler access. IDFG photo

It Bears Repeating

With the summer camping season in full swing, Idaho Fish and Game reminds campers that most conflicts with bears are linked to careless handling of food and trash.

Most conflicts can be avoided with some simple precautions:

Keep a clean camp. Pick up garbage and store it in a closed vehicle or in a plastic bag tied high on a tree limb. Store all food enclosed in an airtight container, camper or vehicle. Never have food in your tent.

Don't bury food scraps or pour cooking grease or anything that might be tasty on the ground or into the fire pit.

Bears have a tremendous sense of smell and they will come looking for an easy meal. Anything that smells good to people, smells good to a bear.

And along with the good memories, bring home the trash.

Doing Your Part for Wildlife

Who is responsible for collecting garbage from the roadside, shoreline and other public places?

Is it your local sheriff, county commissioners, Idaho Fish and Game, or is it the volunteers that already pick up trash left by others in many places?

Trash collection on Idaho Fish and Game's access sites is costly. Disposing of tires, refrigerators, sofas and other discards is expensive and time consuming. The money could be better spent providing a new boat ramp, an outdoor handicapped toilet or fishing pier.

Vandalism is another problem, costing Idaho hunters and anglers tens of thousands of dollars each year. Replacing just one permanent outdoor toilet costs between \$1,500 and \$3,000 each. And that's just for materials, not personnel and equipment time.

What kind of person would blow up a toilet, tear down a sign, or shoot at and damage public property?

We all should care, because all of us ultimately pay to replace damaged public property. Federal tax dollars paid for the buildings and signs on federal lands. License and tag dollars bought buildings, gates, fences and signs on state land and public access sites.

Vandalism and littering close hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing access to private property and deprive us all of enjoying our public lands.

Everyone can help by reporting anyone who litters or vandalizes public or private property by calling the Citizens Against Poaching Hotline at 1-800-632-5999, the local sheriff's office or the nearest Fish and Game office. Write down details about the vehicle involved, describe any people you saw and note the location, day and time of the activity.

Littering on public or private property is punishable by up to six months in jail, a fine of \$1,000 or both. Witnesses who provide information that leads to a citation may obtain a reward.

