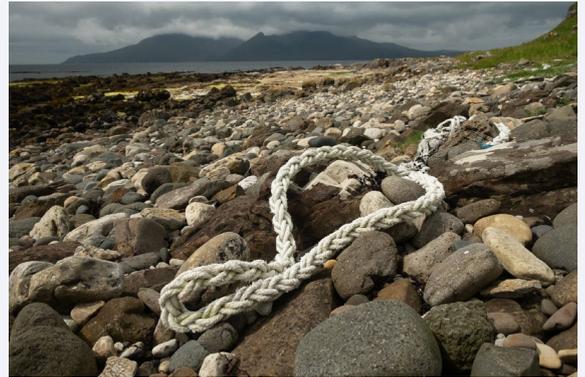

The Good Practice Guide for Landscape Photographers

By Mark Reeves

Landscape photography can be seen as a paradox. As landscape photographers, many of us are excited to travel to and photograph more remote places or spots where not many people go or locations to which we have never been before. There is a thrill to be found in solitude and wilderness but, in going there, our presence inevitably compromises that which we seek.

Most of us don't want to photograph wilderness scenes or supposedly tranquil places with a load of people in the frame, or find that our viewpoint is a quagmire because so many others have stood on the same spot before us and trampled the ground to a pulp. Not only do these things detract from our experience as photographers, but the human presence inevitably impacts on these wild – or not so wild – places.

So it goes without saying that each of us has a duty to minimise our impact when we photograph; whether that be our impact on the environment or on other people – be they photographers or not. With this in mind, the Landscape Group committee has developed a guide to good practice for when we are in the countryside. The guide has been compiled by drawing on various sources including the National Trust, Keep Britain Tidy, UK Hillwalking and the Countryside Code. We invite and encourage all our members to follow the guide. In future, copies will be given to all new members of the group when they join.



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Good practice guide for landscape photographers

Introduction

When working in the field, whether in the countryside or in an urban location, landscape photographers should respect and care for the surrounding environment. Our over-riding maxim should be:

“Take only photographs, leave only footprints”.

The points below are recognised good practice and all members of the RPS Landscape Group are encouraged to follow them.

Respect for the Environment

- Never leave litter; everything you arrived with should go home with you.
- Consider carrying a compostable bin bag in your kit and using it to collect any litter you find on the way back to your car and depositing in a suitable bin.
- Stick to footpaths where they exist. Wear appropriate footwear so you don't need to leave a path to walk around mud and puddles. This will minimise soil erosion and disturbance of wildlife.
- Avoid the busiest locations and go where fewer feet tread.
- Don't share your locations on social media. Doing so can create photographic hotspots, causing significant soil erosion and disturbance to wildlife.
- Sometimes it's inevitable that we have to relieve ourselves whilst on location. Poo should be buried in soil, well away from water courses (ideally at least 30m) and paths. Non-biodegradable items must be disposed of in litter bins.



Respect for Wildlife

- Never deliberately disturb wildlife in order to get your image. Wait for the wildlife to leave or find an alternative viewpoint or location. If specifically photographing wildlife or working near wildlife, follow the RPS Nature Group's Code of Practice

Respect for People

- Be considerate of other photographers; don't walk into their frames, give them space and wait for them to finish if you wish to photograph from the same spot.
- Be considerate of non-photographers; don't block paths, gates and access points and respect personal space.
- When working in remote areas always go properly informed, prepared and equipped. When working in coastal areas always inform yourself of tide times and heights. Calling out rescue services risks other people's lives.
- Leave gates as you find them. Closing open gates, however well intentioned, can cut off livestock from food or water.