

# **How to Obtain a Wilderness Permit for Inyo National Forest**

## **When is a Wilderness Permit Required?**

Wilderness permits are **required year-round** for all overnight trips into the Golden Trout, John Muir, Ansel Adams and Hoover Wilderness areas. Visitors that are day hiking in the Mount Whitney Zone are required to have a Day Use Permit. If your trip will start in Inyo National Forest, follow the procedures listed below to obtain your wilderness permit.

## **What if my trip will include travel in one of the National Parks?**

Wilderness permits are valid for the duration of the trip, including travel to adjoining National Parks and National Forests. You do not need multiple permits for a continuous\* trip. If your trip will begin in a National Park you would obtain your permit from the park. For trips that originate in Sequoia/Kings Canyons National Park call (559) 565-3766, for Yosemite National Park call (209) 372-0740. For PCTA passes for through hikers doing sections of 500 or more miles, contact pcta.org

\*A trip is not considered continuous and a new permit is required if you exit the wilderness for more than 24 hours; or if you exit and then re-enter the wilderness at a different location.

## **Are Wilderness Permits Limited?**

Each wilderness has a management plan developed to meet the special needs of that specific wilderness area. Many wilderness areas in Inyo National Forest have seasonal quotas that limit the number of people allowed to enter daily. This is to help protect the wilderness value of the area. Because quotas are based on the number of people starting on the trail each day, you cannot have more people than indicated by your permit, and everyone in your party must start on the location and entry date indicated.

<b>Wilderness Area</b>	<b>Permit Requirements</b>
Hoover Wilderness & Hall Natural Area	Permits are required year round for all overnight trips. Hall Natural Area is day use only, no overnight camping. Permits are non-quota year round, reservations are not needed. Permits are available at Tuolumne Meadows Wilderness Office and Inyo locations.
Ansel Adams Wilderness	Permits are required year round for all overnight trips. Quotas apply May 1 through November 1, and are non-quota the remainder of the year.
John Muir Wilderness	Permits are required year round for Day use of the Mt Whitney Zone and all overnight trips in John Muir Wilderness. Quotas apply May 1 through November 1, and are non-quota the remainder of the year. Exit quota applies for trips that end via the Mt Whitney trail.
Golden Trout Wilderness	Permits are required year round for all overnight trips. Some trails are non-quota all year. Quotas apply from last Friday in June through September 15, and are non-quota for the remainder of the year.
South Sierra Wilderness	Permits recommended year round for overnight trips. Permits are non-quota year round, reservations are not needed.

## **Are there regulations I should know about while planning my trip?**

Many areas in Inyo National Forest and the adjacent National Parks require food and refuse to be stored in bear resistant containers. In order to protect the wilderness quality of visiting these areas, groups are limited to 15 people or less. Campfires are not allowed in many areas to protect area resources. Visitors are prohibited from bringing pack goats in some areas to protect Bighorn Sheep. Grazing restrictions apply to stock use. National Park regulations apply when you enter park boundaries; pets are not allowed and additional group size limits apply for cross country travel. If your trip includes travel in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park you must pick up the permit in person during open hours, night-drop permit service is not available. Please contact the visitor center nearest the trail you plan to visit, or call for wilderness information at 760-873-2483.

**Mount Whitney Permits.** A valid permit is required year round to climb Mount Whitney. Different types of trips have separate permit quotas. Due to the high demand for Mt. Whitney permits, a lottery is held for reservations. There is not a waiting list for cancelations. Other types of Mt Whitney trips are not in the lottery.

Permit Quota	Description
<p><b>Day Use- Mt Whitney Zone</b> (all Routes in Mt. Whitney Zone) 100 people each day Lottery for reservations</p>	<p><b>Mount Whitney Day Use Permits are for hiking on a single day.</b> If you will enter any part of the Mount Whitney Zone, and the entire trip will be on one calendar date, a Day Use Permit is required. You can start a day hike before dawn, but you cannot be on the trail more than one calendar date. No consecutive day use, if your trip is more than one calendar date an Overnight permit is required. A day use permit cannot be used as part of an overnight trip to pass through the Mt Whitney Zone.</p> <p><b>Reservations</b> can be made through the <b>Mt Whitney lottery</b> for trips during the quota period of May 1 to November 1. After the lottery, any day use space remaining can be reserved up until 2 days before the hike. One day before the hike, leftover Day Use space is free. Visit the Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center to pick up your permit along with human waste management pack-it-out kits.</p>
<p><b>Mt Whitney Trail Overnight -</b> (or Multi-night ) 60 people each day Lottery for reservations</p>	<p><b>Overnight permits</b> are for backpacking where you will stay in the wilderness for one or more nights. This includes John Muir Trail trips that will begin at Mt Whitney. A day use permit cannot be used as part of an overnight trip to pass through the Mt Whitney Zone. If you have an overnight permit that includes entering the Mt. Whitney zone you do not need an additional day use permit, the overnight permit is valid.</p> <p><b>Reservations</b> can be made through the <b>Mt Whitney lottery</b> for trips during the quota period of May 1 to November 1. After the lottery, any space remaining can be reserved up until 2 days before the trip. One day before the trip, leftover space is free. Visit the Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center to pick up your permit along with human waste management pack-it-out kits.</p>
<p><b>Trail Crest Exit</b> Exit space is issued along with the entry date and trail. 25 people per day. 15 people reserved 4 people walk-in</p>	<p><b>Trail Crest Exit Quota</b> applies to visitors who descend the Mt Whitney Trail after beginning the trip elsewhere. Quota applies to the date you come off the trail. You are allowed to camp in the Mt. Whitney Zone.</p> <p><b>Reservations</b> for Exit space can be made along with reserving the entry date and trail. If the entry date is changed the exit space is released, and may not be available for use with a new entry date. Up to 15 people can be reserved. Space for 10 people is set aside for walk in permits.</p>
<p><b>North Fork of Lone Pine- Overnight</b> (or Multi-night) 10 people each day. 6 people reserved 4 people walk-in</p>	<p><b>The North Fork of Lone Pine Creek trail</b> ends at Iceberg Lake, beneath the East face of Mt Whitney. It provides access to the base of many technically demanding climbing routes. The difficulty of these routes is often underestimated and includes exposure to heights while scrambling over steep ledges and granite outcrops.</p> <p><b>Reservations for Overnight use</b> of North Fork of Lone Pine Creek trail fill very quickly. Up to 6 people can be reserved. Space for 4 people is set aside for walk in permits.</p> <p><b>Day use</b> of North Fork of Lone Pine Creek area requires a Mt Whitney Day Use Permit if you will hike beyond Lower Boy Scout Lake.(see Mount Whitney Day Use above)</p>
<p><b>Trips Not Entering Mt. Whitney Zone.</b> Day use- No permit needed. Overnight use- quota</p>	<p><b>Quotas apply</b> to all routes and cross country travel in areas with quotas. Your route and first night destination is used to clarify what quota applies. Non-quota permits can be issued one or two days before the trip. Day use does not require a permit.</p> <p><b>Reservations</b> are not needed when non-quota is indicated. Self-issue permit forms are available during the non quota- winter season (November 2 to April 30). View</p>

varies by trail.

reservation availability for details.

**When can I get a permit?** Permits are issued shortly before the trip to insure the most current wilderness information is available. Reserved permits and non quota permits can be picked up one or two days before the trip. Some quota space is saved for visitors who arrive without reservations (except Mt. Whitney). These “Walk in” permits are available to anyone in person at the visitor center, starting at 11 a.m. on the day before your entry date. Requests are high on weekends, holidays and during the months of July and August for walk-in permits.

**Where can I pick up my wilderness permit?** You must obtain your wilderness permit from one of the Inyo National Forest Visitor Centers. Trips that begin in the Mt Whitney Zone must be issued at Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center. We recommend you pick up your wilderness permit from the location closest to your entry trail.

**Inyo National Forest wilderness permits are issued at the following locations:**

**Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center**  
Junction of Hwy 395 and State Route 136  
2 miles South of Lone Pine, CA  
(760)876-6200 or TDD (760)876-6201

**Mammoth Lakes Visitor Center**  
2500 Main Street  
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546  
(760) 924-5500 or TDD (760) 924-5531

**White Mountain Ranger Station**  
798 N. Main Street  
Bishop, CA 93514  
(760)873-2500 or TDD (760) 873-2501

**Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center**  
Hwy 395, North of Lee Vining, East of 395  
Lee Vining, CA 93541  
(760) 647-3044 or TDD (760) 647-3045

**What fees apply?** There is no fee for permits. Fees are charged only if reservations are issued. Reservation fees are based on the number of people and where you are going. Visitors to the Mt. Whitney Zone are \$15 per person. Other areas are \$5 per person. The fee to changing your reservation is \$10 per group. No refunds.

**When can I make a reservation?**

- **Mt. Whitney Day Use** and **Mt. Whitney Trail Overnight** trips can be reserved by a lottery that begins in February. After March 15, a freeze on transactions is in effect while visitors are notified of lottery results. Available dates after the lottery are published on the Inyo website and can be reserved in the end of April. If space is available, reservations can be made up until 2 days before the trip.
- **All other trips** with quotas can be reserved from 6 months in advance and up until 2 days before the trip if space is available.
- **Non quota trails** do not need reservations, unless the Mt. Whitney exit quota for Trail Crest is being used.

**Is all the space reserved?** Mt. Whitney trail overnight and day use permits are 100% reservable, all the space for July, August and September is usually reserved during the lottery. However, it is common to have openings from cancelations a few days before the trip date.

**For all other quota trails**, up to 60% of the quota space can be reserved. At least 40% of the space is saved to issue to visitors who request a walk in permit in person.

**How do I make a reservation?** On-line reservation software is in development and will change how **2012** season reservations are made. **Trips in 2011 will continue making reservations by contacting the Inyo National Forest staff at the Wilderness Permit Office.**

**Inyo National Forest  
Wilderness Permit Office  
351 Pacu Lane Suite 200  
Bishop, CA 93514**

**Wilderness Permit Phone Line (760) 873-2483  
Fax Line (760) 873-2484**

Open ~ 8am-4:30pm, 7 days a week, from May 15 to October 15.  
Winter season ~ Closed weekends and holidays.

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