




Frequently Asked Questions
Arapaho and Roosevelt NF and Pawnee NG





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| Camping | | How do I find a campground? | Check out our Campground Table! This table lists the 52 campgrounds we have across the forest, the total number of sites in the each campground, dates that the campground is open, the location of the campground. Please note that only about a quarter of those campgrounds are reservable and majority of the campgrounds are first come first serve. |
| | | How can I make a camping reservation? | You need to plan ahead! Many of our campgrounds are reserved up to 6 months in advance. The best time to make a campground reservation is 180 days before your arrival, by searching for the campground in recreation.gov . <i>Campground reservations cannot be made within 3 or less days from your arrival.</i> |
| | | Are there any campsites available? | Good question. If you call our office we likely won't know if a campsite is available, as there are not any direct lines to the campgrounds to find out. National Forest campgrounds are intended to be a primitive escape from the hustle and bustle, so most of them don't have cell service. We do receive periodic updates from campground hosts or recreation staff who maintain the campground, but these updates are not an accurate representation of current availability! |
| | | How can I find a campsite for the weekend? | By going to first come first serve campgrounds! Majority of campgrounds on the National Forest are considered first-come, first-serve so no reservations are accepted. If a site is open when you arrive (no paid tag on the campsite post, no one occupying the site) then you may pull into the site and pay for the number of nights you would like to stay by using the self-serve fee tube at the entrance of the campground (cash or check only). YOU (not your belongings) MUST OCCUPY THE SITE during the first night of stay. Warning: first come first serve site frequently fill up as soon as Thursday night or Friday morning during the summer months. |
| | | Where can I camp when the campgrounds are full? | You may disperse camp, also called "boondocking" or "drop-camp". However, this style of camping takes extra planning! There are areas on the forest that you are permitted to camp not within a developed campground or recreation site. When camping in these locations you are completely self-sufficient and away from amenities such as restrooms, picnic tables, water, etc. You need to prepare ahead of time and know where you intend to stay, bring everything to be self-sufficient (water, a way to handle your waste, proper food and trash storage, etc.), and know the regulations. Motor vehicles use maps are a handy way to determine where you may legally disperse camp, noted by a dotted line along the side of roads. Please follow Leave No Trace principles. |
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|  Campfires | <p>Can I have a campfire?</p> | <p>It depends on the current fire restrictions for the forest (not the county or city fire restrictions). Please check today's fire restrictions to see if you may have a campfire. Fire restrictions are organized into three stages: Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3. Stage 1 is the lowest restriction which allows visitors to have campfires in Forest Service installed metal fire rings only. Stage 2 does not allow fires of any kind. Stage 3 is the highest restriction and results in a closure of the forest to all visitors.</p> |
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|  Weddings | <p>How can I have a wedding in the National Forest?</p> | <p>You may have an event on the forest that is 75 people or less without needing a special use permit as-long-as you are not hiring people to work at your event, including – caterers, wedding planners, etc. You also may not “reserve” or “hold” a location in the forest or on the grasslands – excluding established recreation sites (such as group campgrounds). You may not alter or impact the natural landscape in any way such as: setting up tents, using bails of hay for decoration, tying lights to trees, use of fake petals, etc.</p> |
| | <p>Do I need a photography permit to take engagement or wedding photos on the forest?</p> | <p>You are allowed to take photos on the forest without a permit as-long-as there is no creation of a product for sale or monetary exchange for professional services. When taking photos on the forest, both personally or professionally, you may not disturb or displace other users or alter the environment (no fences, altars, stages, etc.) Wedding photographers for small elopements/ceremonies on the National Forest do not need to obtain a permit as long as the photographs are for nominal use by friends and families and are not resold or used for commercial purposes.</p> |

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|  Forest Service Roads | <p>What are the road conditions?</p> | <p>Road conditions vary from season to season and day to day. A great place to see if a road is open or closed are our Road Status Tables, which are organized by Ranger District. When driving on Forest Service roads please be aware that conditions may change while you are out on the forest. You could encounter trees down along your route, rain and snow causing mud pits and hazardous driving conditions, even if a road is marked as open on the website. Majority of our roads are closed due to hazardous conditions and snow from Nov. 15 – June 15.</p> |
| | <p>What vehicles are allowed?</p> | <p>The type of vehicle permitted on each road varies from road to road, the best resource to determine what vehicle you may drive on a particular road is by consulting the Motor Vehicle Use Maps. These maps are available in a variety of formats including printable PDF or mobile device downloads which offers off-line GPS tracking with the Avenza App. Using the map legend and the shading of road you can determine if the road is open to “highway legal vehicles only”, “all vehicles”, “off-road vehicles” or “motorcycles”.</p> |

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|  Forest Products | <p>How can I harvest firewood to take home?</p> | <p>You may purchase wood bundles from campground hosts or collect small amounts of dead and down for immediate use (i.e. picnicking or camping). When harvesting firewood, transplants, post and poles, or mushrooms to take home, those resources are categorized as “Forest Products”. A permit is required to remove these products. Permits are generally available for purchase months May – Nov. If you would like to request a permit to remove Forest Product to take home for personal use, please visit our Forest Product page.</p> |
| | <p>How can I harvest mushrooms for personal use?</p> | <p>When harvesting mushrooms, firewood, transplants, or post and poles to take home, those resources are categorized as “Forest Products”. A permit is required to remove these products. Permits are generally available for purchase, months May – Nov. If you would like to request a permit to remove Forest Product to take home for personal use, please visit our Forest Product page.</p> |

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|  Shooting | <p>Where can I target shoot?</p> | <p>You may target shoot on the forest as-long-as you are staying outside of shooting area closures, you are not shooting across roads or trails, not shooting within 150 yards of any developed buildings or recreation sites (such as a campsite) or occupied areas, not shooting in any place or manner where person or property may be exposed to injury, and you are not firing tracer bullets. Additionally, we have target restrictions specific to the forests and grassland; exploding targets are never allowed! If you prefer to shoot at a developed, designated, shooting area you can use the following Colorado Parks and Wildlife tool to find your nearest range.</p> |
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|  Hiking | <p>How can I find where to go hiking?</p> | <p>Plan ahead! There are many resources online, through apps, and on our forest website that can offer great suggestions to start your trip planning. We recommend COTrex, but always remember to check our website and public forums for trail updates. For a complete list of trails on our forest please visit the day hiking or backpacking page on our website. Another great online resource to start your trip planning is interactive National Forest Visitor Map, which will allow you to explore recreational opportunities in our forest and nation-wide. Additionally, local resources such as the Poudre Wilderness Volunteers in Larimer county and the Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance for Indian Peaks and James Peak wilderness are other great resource to find trails and trail conditions.</p> |
| | <p>Can I bring my dog?</p> | <p>You may bring your leashed dog on most Forest Service trails. The exceptions to this rule include: Brainard Lake recreation trail which has different rules base on season and trails, or if a trail crosses into another federal land boundary such as the National Park service where dogs are not allowed.</p> |

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| Reservations |  | Backpacking in the Indian Peaks Wilderness | Permits are required for any overnight trips into the Indian Peaks Wilderness or for any large groups (8-12) people hiking within the wilderness area. Overnight permits are required June 1 – Sept. 15 for overnight users and year-round for large groups. Permits for the whole season will be released on March 16 through the recreation.gov Full Season in Advance Page , so you will need to plan ahead. A small number of permits are with-held from this initially release and are saved to be released on a 3-day rolling window during the June 1 – Sept. 15 season, on the 3-day in Advance Page . |
| |  | Brainard Lake | During the summer, timed entry tickets are required for entry into the Brainard Lake Recreation Area, and sold on recreation.gov , by parking area. You need to park in the lot for which you have purchased a timed entry ticket. Reservations open 8AM MST the Thursday before Memorial Day and are available on a 15 day rolling window until October 16 th . If you have a Pawnee campground reservation you do not need a timed entry to enter the recreation area, but if you plan to park anywhere other than the campground, you will need a timed entry for that specific lot. If you have a permit for the Indian Peaks Wilderness you will still need a timed entry for where you plan on parking within Brainard Lake Recreation Area, which will be available on March 16. During the winter you do not need any timed entry reservations, since the only open parking area is Gateway. |
| | | Timed entry Mount Evans | The opening date of Mount Evans is weather and road condition dependent. Conditions permitting, Mount Evans usually opens during Memorial Day weekend and stays open until the Labor Day holiday. Timed entry tickets are required for entry through the recreation.gov website . Reservation of a timed entry ticket are available 30 days in advance of the first of the month at 8AM MST. For example on June 1, tickets will be available for the dates of July 1-31. Additionally, a handful of tickets will be available on a two day rolling window throughout the season. Please note that tickets need to be purchased in advance, as there is no service or timed entry tickets available for sale at the entrance station. |
| |  | AA Barn | The AA Barn is a large group picnic site available for day reservations. A reservation grants your group access to the barn from sun-up to sun-down. The barn is available for reservations during the months of June, July, August, September, and reservations generally open January 1 st . To learn more about the AA Barn and to make a reservation please visit recreation.gov . *Please note that reservations are only available for the same calendar year. |
| |  | Mestaa'Èhehe Mountain Fire Lookout | The fire lookout is available for overnight use and reservations are released on a six-month rolling window on the recreation.gov website , year round. The fire lookout contains an electric stove, refrigerator, heat, table, exterior incinerating toilet, and bed for 4 people. There is no cleaning in-between bookings, and guest are expected to pack-in and pack-out all trash and personal belongings. |