



Trip Planning Guide for Wilderness Visitors Inyo National Forest



Come...
take a deep breath of clean
mountain air.
Put on your pack and
hit the trail.

Come...
to experience nature and let
it refresh your spirit.

As you plan your trip,
remember that we must take
care of this amazing place.

While you are here,
be respectful of water,
woods and wildlife.

Travel lightly on the land.

Remember to leave this
place undamaged..
so it will continue to be
what we seek of wilderness.

USDA Forest Service
Inyo National Forest
351 Pacu Lane, Suite 200
Bishop, CA 93514
760 873-2483

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A Great Wilderness Trip Involves Planning and Preparation



Good planning supports a safe and pleasurable wilderness trip. Knowing whether campfires are prohibited or what method of storing your food is required will help you choose a location that suits your wilderness desires. The Inyo National Forest offers extensive opportunities for fishing and hunting, photography, peak-bagging and rock climbing or just enjoying the pristine beauty of this amazing place. So whether you are seeking exceptional scenery, solitude or sharing a wilderness adventure, there are many ways to create a memorable experience.

There are some inherent risks with wilderness travel. Your level of preparation and the supplies that you choose to bring will determine your ability to be safe and self-reliant during the challenges that may come from weather, route selection, trail conditions, wildlife, altitude, emergency situations and many others.

Remember, successful trips don't just happen. They are the result of careful planning and the application of good judgment. This trip planning guide is just a beginning, for guidebooks and maps of this area please visit the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association online at: www.esiaonline.com. Bookstores, libraries, and outdoor equipment stores may also have trip planning materials.

Inyo National Forest	Chamber of Commerce	Emergency
Inyo National Forest General Recreation- (760) 873-2408 Wilderness Information- (760) 873-2485 www.fs.usda.gov/inyo	Lee Vining (760) 647-6629	For emergencies call the local Sheriff's Office.
Wilderness Permit Office 351 Pacu Lane Suite 200 Bishop, CA 93514 Phone: (760) 873-2483 Fax: (760) 873-2484	June Lake (760) 647-6629	Mono County Sheriff (760) 935-4066
Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center Hwy 395, North of Lee Vining Lee Vining, CA 93541 Phone: (760) 647-3044	Mammoth Lakes (760) 934-3068 Mammoth Lakes Visitors Bureau (760) 934-2712	Bishop Sheriff (760) 873-7887
Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center 2500 Main St Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 (760) 924-5500	Bishop (760) 873-8405	Independence Sheriff (760) 878-0383
White Mountain Welcome Center 798 N. Main St Bishop, CA 93514 (760) 873-2500	Independence (760) 878-0084	Lone Pine Sheriff (760) 876-5606
Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center Junction of Hwy 395 and SR 136 2 Miles South of Lone Pine, CA 93545 (760) 876-6200	Lone Pine (760) 876-4444	Olancho Sheriff (760) 852-4313

Leave No Trace Principles

Plan your trip ahead and prepare!

Be informed, accept responsibility for your actions and plan your logistics well.

- Know your skills and abilities
- Select and use proper gear
- Plan your meals
- Check at ranger stations for current conditions

Travel and camp on durable surfaces

- Travel on trails
- Camp on durable surfaces

Pack it in, pack it out

- Properly dispose of all trash, human waste, wastewater, and fish remains.
- Trash and leftover food should be packed out. Food and trash should not be buried or burned; that will cause wildlife problems and degrade campsites.
- Dispose of fish remains well away from camp.
- Bury human waste at least 6 -8 inches deep.



Respect wildlife

- Be aware of the wildlife species around you
- Be aware of seasonal stresses on wildlife
 - Store food securely against bears
 - Do not put food in the tent

Leave what you find

- Don't damage vegetation
- Leave natural objects and cultural artifacts

Be considerate of others

- Manage your pet
- Minimize overcrowding
- Let nature's sound prevail
- Avoid conflicts with other visitors

Minimize use and impact of fires

- Consider using a stove instead of a campfire for cooking.
- Check for fire restrictions before your trip.
- Where allowed, keep fires small.
- Use established campfire rings.
- Use only dead and downed wood.

Wilderness Regulations

The following acts are prohibited in wilderness

- Camping overnight in the Wilderness without a valid wilderness permit.
- Possessing or storing food, toiletries or refuse in a manner that allows bears or animals access to it.
- Storing or leaving unattended equipment, personal property or supplies for more than 24 hours.
- Camping within 100 feet of a water source. If steep or rocky terrain does not permit camping 100 feet from water, camping is permitted from 50-100 feet away from the water source.
- Washing and/or discharging soap waste within 100 feet of lakes or streams.
- Depositing bodily waste within 100 feet of lakes, streams, campsites or trails.
- Discharging a firearm, except for emergencies and the taking of game as permitted by California state law.
- Possessing or using a wheeled or mechanical device (bicycle, motorcycle, chainsaw, cart, etc...) except for persons requiring wheelchairs, who are allowed non-motorized equipment for mobility.
- Shortcutting a switchback on any forest trail.
- Entering or using the wilderness in a group larger than 15 persons or with more than 25 head of pack or saddle stock.
- Hitching, tethering or tying pack or saddle stock within 100 feet of lakes, streams, trails or campsites except while loading or unloading.
- Leaving any debris, garbage or refuse within the wilderness

Smart and Safe Wilderness Travel

Food Storage

While scenes like this are initially cute, the end result is that these cubs may be killed as adults because careless campers allowed them to develop “bad bear” habits. Storing your food properly is vital to keeping the “wild” part of the wilderness. You can help ensure that more bears won’t lose their lives because they have become accustomed to scavenging for human food instead of foraging for their natural diet.

Before you come to the area:

- Ask about current bear activity in the area at the nearest ranger station or visitor center.
- Learn if your backpacking trip will travel through an area that requires use of a bear resistant food storage container.
- View maps of required bear container use areas on the Inyo National Forest website.
- National park regulations may be different. Check Yosemite or Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park websites to learn where containers are required for those areas.
- Ask if food lockers are provided in parking areas and campgrounds you plan to visit.



Do not leave food out where animals can get into it.

Bears are smart and fast and have a very strong sense of smell!

When should you be storing your food? Whenever you are not actively preparing, eating or unpacking your food and even then you should be vigilant. Bears are bold and may wait near the bear box until you have walked back to your car before grabbing your stuff and taking off. Not only are they attracted to the scent of food and garbage but bears will eat anything with an odor, for example: toothpaste, soap, hand sanitizer and sunscreen. Store all your food and non-food items with odors in storage lockers if they are available. If there are no lockers, store your food in your vehicle and keep them covered and out of view. Remember, portable bear canisters also work when you camp at campgrounds. All food needs to be secured; even cans and vacuum sealed items can be found and consumed by bears. Proper food storage is the law and you could be fined for not securing your food.

Normally bears are not aggressive towards humans, but they are possessive of food and will defend it. They are very quick, powerful, and dangerous when confronted. Never sleep with your food! If a bear gets into you food, stay a safe distance away and then clean up any food left afterwards. Report the incident to a ranger. You are the most important part of a successful bear protection program. You can keep bears wild and alive by storing your food properly.

Improper Food Storage Results in...

Property Damage Tickets or Fines A Safety Threat A Dead Bear

**Be respectful of wildlife and store your food in the proper facilities provided.
Do not approach, feed, or harass wildlife.**

Keeping Wildlife Wild... It's Everyone's Responsibility!

Smart and Safe Wilderness Travel

Food Storage--Methods

Bear boxes and bear containers are the most effective methods to store food. Counter-balancing can only be used where containers are not required.



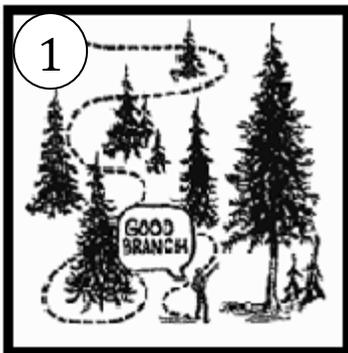
Bear Boxes: Usually located at trailhead parking and campgrounds, these sturdy metal boxes employ a latch that bears haven't yet figured out how to open, but it only works if you close it all the way! Trailhead parking area boxes may have limited space.

Bear Containers: There are many different types of bear resistant food containers, but most are shaped like a small barrel. This is a very effective, portable way to secure food. Remember, in areas that require use of a container, all scented items (food, toiletries, and garbage) must fit in the container. Choose compact foods that are not damaged by crushing and remove extra packaging to maximize space. Be "bear alert" when you are preparing food. Leave the container on the ground in your kitchen area; this should be around 50 ft. away from your sleeping area.

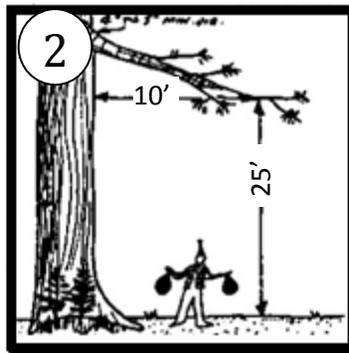


Counter-Balancing: This method of hanging food is **only acceptable where bear containers are not required**. Hanging your food is more of a delaying tactic. Given enough time, many bear are able to get food even when it is properly counter-balanced. You may need to wake up in the night and scare off a bear from your food.

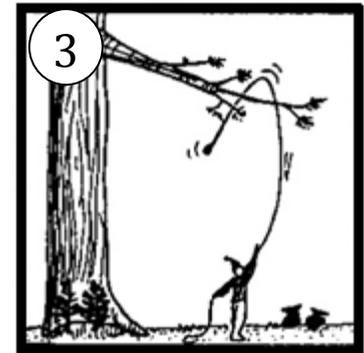
Counter Balance Technique



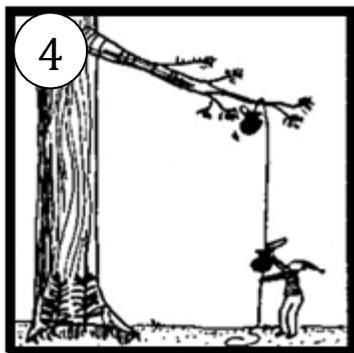
1 Search for a tree!



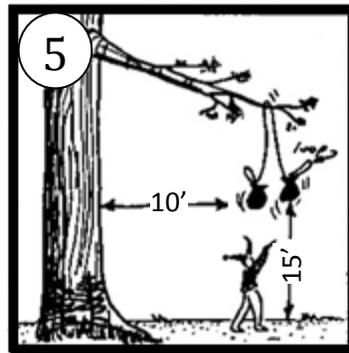
2 Find an appropriate branch and balance your food sacks (equal weight in both sacks).



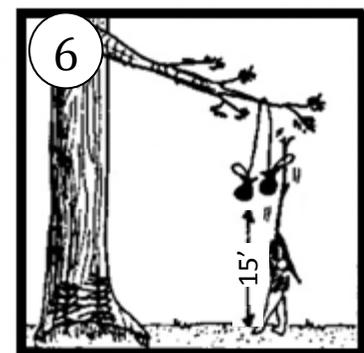
3 Throw your rope over the branch, as far out on the branch as will support weight of food (and not a bear).



4 Tie on food. With one sack hoisted to branch, tie second sack as high as possible.



5 Before you toss sacks into position, tie a secure loop in rope near one sack for retrieval, put excess rope in sack.



6 To retrieve your food hook loop with a stick and pull down.

Smart and Safe Wilderness Travel

Campfires

There are many areas where campfires are prohibited to protect the long term health of the forest. Campfires are not allowed in many areas where Whitebark Pine live because these trees grow slowly and can not make enough firewood to keep up with the number of visitors that might want to make campfires.

Whitebark Pine can live up to 700 years. They must grow for 20-60 years before they are old enough start to make cones with nuts. Allowing the fallen wood and pine needles to decay helps enrich the soil. These slow growing trees provide food and shelter to many forest animals. Mountain Bluebirds and Northern Flickers often nest in these pines. Grouse shelter under the pines. The Clark's Nutcracker has the habit of collecting the pine nuts and will carry nuts to other locations to stash for later. Squirrels hide nuts for winter. Black bear seek nut stashes to fatten up for hibernation. Any nuts left in these stashes help to replant new Whitebark Pine.

In general, wildfire is part of the renewing cycle to help control pests and disease in pine forests. Careful fire management is necessary where Whitebark Pine live in order to protect this increasingly rare species that contributes so much to the wilderness community. For more information about Whitebark Pine, visit-- www.whitebarkfound.org

Maps that show the areas closed to campfires can be viewed on the Inyo National Forest website. During times of high wildfire danger, campfires may temporarily be prohibited everywhere. Other fire regulations may apply at campgrounds or front country camping, so be sure to check with the ranger station or visitor center to find out if you will need a campfire permit.



Smart and Safe Wilderness Travel

Streams



Melting spring snow or midsummer rains can result in swollen streams and creeks, making it a challenge to cross safely.

Look for the best place to cross given your skills and abilities. Logs and rocks can be slick, slippery or unstable. Water above your knees may knock you off your feet. Always unbuckle your pack's waist belt when fording a stream. Trekking poles or a stick may help your balance.

Groups should make sure everyone in your party has safely crossed before continuing on.

Smart and Safe Wilderness Travel

Save Yourself

Travel

In the wilderness you will be on your own when deciding your route. Direction signs may be few or non-existent, so you'll need to rely on your own skill with map reading and compass navigation. An accurate, detailed map is essential. Keep track of where you are on your map as you travel. If you think you are lost, don't panic; Stop and Think. Review landmarks that you have passed to help figure out where you went wrong and how to get back on course. If you are using a GPS (Global Positioning System) unit, make sure to also bring a map and compass in case the unit breaks or the batteries fail. Think before activating an emergency location device; you will be asking rescue volunteers to put themselves at risk to come to your aid. More information about wilderness safety is in the [Learning Center](#).

Water

Stay healthy by treating water before you drink it. Stream and lake water may look clear and pure, but may have harmful organisms that can make you sick. *Giardia lamblia* is one of many common parasites that live in water. Some ways to purify your water are:

- Boil water for 5 minutes
- Water purification tablets
- Filter using a 2 micron system

Remember to wash your hands before handling food.

First Aid & Emergency Rescue

Having a well stocked first aid kit and knowing what to do in an emergency is especially important for wilderness first aid. Cell phone coverage is not reliable in remote locations. If you need medical assistance, someone may need to walk out to request help. Helicopter flights in high altitude mountain terrain may be delayed by darkness, wind or other conditions. It may be many hours or in some cases even days before help will arrive. If you are requesting help for a medical evacuation, contact the Sheriff's Office nearest the emergency. Provide clear information including where the victim is located, name and age of the person and the nature of the injury or emergency. A repeat of 3 blasts on an emergency whistle indicates that you need help. A signal mirror can be used to flash aircraft to indicate your location.



Dehydration

Exercise, especially combined with dry air and high altitude will increase the amount of water your body needs to stay healthy. Signs of dehydration include chapped lips, headache, fatigue and infrequent or dark colored urine.

Altitude Sickness

Rapid increases in altitude can make you sick. If your body does not adjust to the increase in altitude and symptoms become more severe, it could become life threatening. Going down to a lower elevation will usually relieve mild symptoms of headache, nausea, difficulty sleeping and fatigue. More severe symptoms, like extreme shortness of breath, fluid in the lungs, confusion, loss of coordination or balance indicate what may be a life threatening condition. Anyone with severe symptoms should immediately be assisted to a lower elevation and should seek medical help.

Hypothermia

Letting your body get too cold can be serious, even fatal. Prevention is the best medicine. Stay dry, layer clothing, have adequate food, water and shelter from the wind. Early warning signs of uncontrolled shivering, slow or slurred speech, bluish tinge to lips, lack of coordination, and poor concentration indicate a person is too cold. Help warm the person by seeking shelter from the wind, replace any wet clothing, and share body heat if necessary. Give warm fluids or food only if the person is conscious. Alcohol will make you colder.

Recreation Use & Facilities

Wilderness Backcountry

In the wilderness motorized or mechanical activities are not allowed. Activities like backpacking, hiking, skiing mountaineering, and horse camping are allowed. Groups are limited to 15 people or less, in order to preserve the solitude and tranquility of the backcountry. There are many maintained trails through the area, but no developed campground facilities. Structures are limited to historic huts or landmarks.

Campgrounds

Many of our campgrounds provide running water, bathroom facilities and access for people with disabilities. Our campground facilities are described under "Recreation & Camping" on the Inyo National Forest website. Campground reservations can be made on the internet at www.recreation.gov or call 1-877-444-6777

Non-Wilderness Front Country

In many cases front country may be as beautiful as wilderness, but non-wilderness activities, such as mountain bicycling and OHV use are allowed. There are more options regarding campfires and dispersed camping. Larger group sizes are accepted. Front country is a good place for organized events, family reunions or weddings. A campfire permit or Special Use permit may be required.

Resorts

There are also a variety of resorts and RV parks in the area. Many of these accommodations have showers, electricity, cabins and other amenities. Resorts are described under "Recreation- Camping & Cabins" on the Inyo National Forest website. For information about other area resorts near Inyo National Forest, contact the local chamber of commerce.

Getting a Wilderness Permit

For more information about getting a walk-in permit or reservations, check out these links on the Inyo National Forest website www.fs.usda.gov/inyo and look under "Permits & Passes – Recreation" or contact the Wilderness Permit Office at (760) 873-2483.

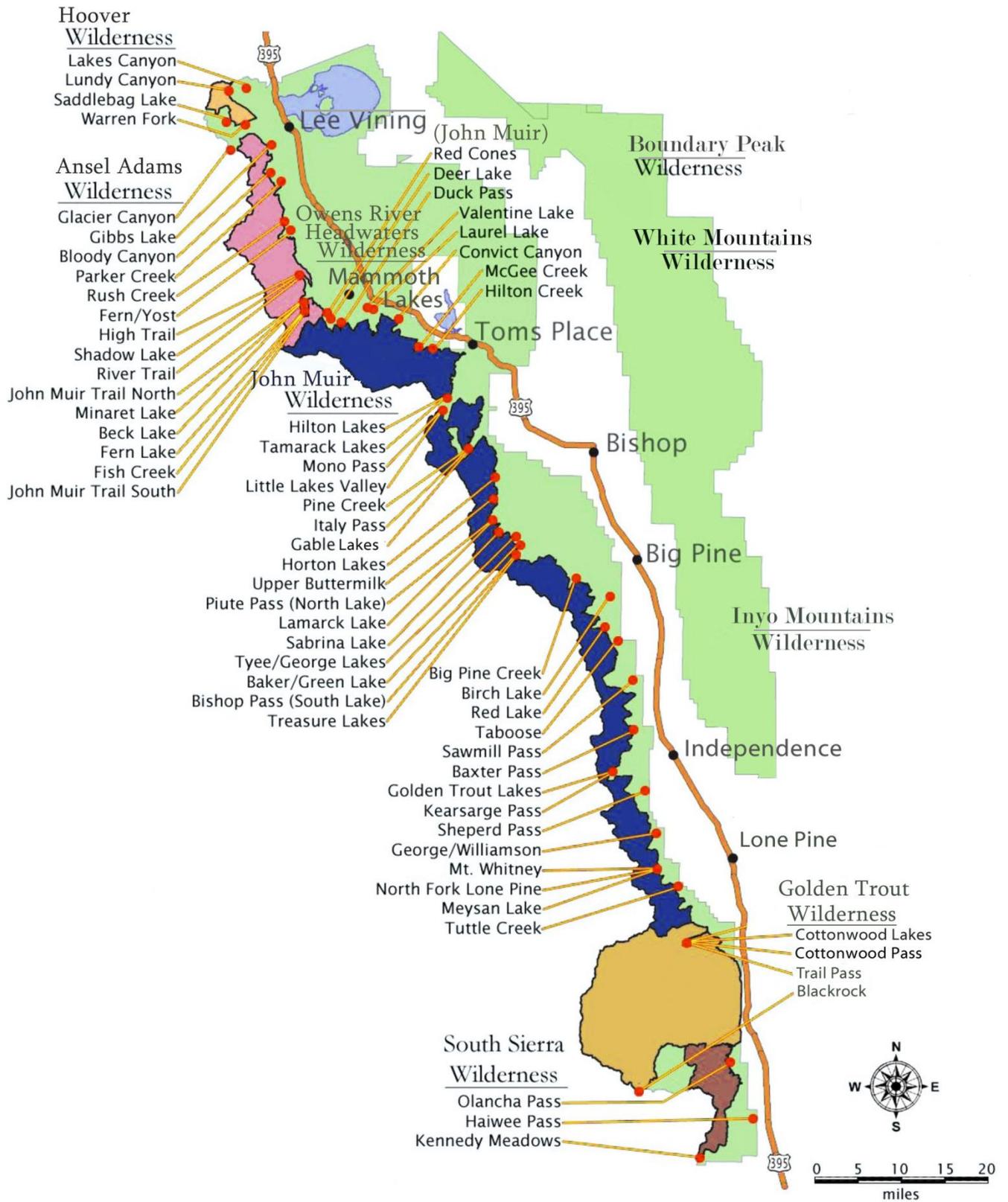
- "How to Obtain a Wilderness Permit" has details about when and where wilderness permits are required, where to pick up a permit, and when quotas limit the number of permits that will be issued.
- "List of Trails & Quotas" has links to individual trail information and the quota that applies to each trail.
- "Dates Full for Reservations" lists what dates are fully reserved for each trail. Additional space is saved for walk in permits.

Whether you choose to make a reservation or get a walk-in permit, you will need to provide the following information:

- Entry trail and exit trail
- Entry date and exit date
- Total # of people in your party (including yourself)
- Group leader's name, address and phone number
- Itinerary information (where are you camping along the trail)

You should research alternate trails that you would be willing to hike on in case your first choice trail is not available. Descriptions of each trail can be found on the Inyo National Forest website under "Recreation & Hiking". The only guarantee that your group will fit into trail quotas is to reserve your trip.

Map of Inyo National Forest Trails



Wilderness Areas:

Additional information about each wilderness area can be found at: www.sierrawild.gov

Ansel Adams Wilderness:

- Permits are required year round for overnight trips.
- Reservation and quota period apply:
May 1 through November 1.

Boundary Peak

- Wilderness permits are not required. Get a campfire permit for dispersed camping.
- For more information contact: White Mt. Ranger Station.

Golden Trout Wilderness:

- Permits are required year round for overnight trips.
- Reservation and quota period apply:
The last Friday in June to September 15th

Hoover Wilderness:

- Permits are required year round for overnight trips.
- Hall Natural Area is Day Use Only.

Inyo Mountains

- Wilderness permits are not required. Get a campfire permit for dispersed camping.
- For more information contact: Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center.

John Muir Wilderness:

- Permits are required year round for overnight trips.
- Permits are required year round for Day Use of the Mt. Whitney Zone.
- Reservations and quota period apply:
May 1 through November 1.

Owens River Headwaters

- Wilderness permits are not required. Get a campfire permit for dispersed camping.
- For more information contact: Mammoth Lakes Visitor Center.

South Sierra Wilderness:

- Permits are required year round for overnight trips.
- Trails are not limited by quotas.

White Mountains Wilderness

- Wilderness permits are not required. Get a campfire permit for dispersed camping.
- For more information contact: White Mt. Ranger Station.

Commercial Use Information:

If you are planning a trip that includes any service from a commercial guide or pack station, call the commercial operator directly to reserve the trip. For many trails, commercial operators have a separate quota. Making your own non-commercial reservation does not guarantee space will be available for a trip using commercial services. Some areas require special approval for commercial services, so make your arrangements well before your trip.

Some Things to Remember

Things to do before your trip begins:

- ✓ Visit the Leave No Trace website to learn more about how to minimize your impact on the wilderness www.lnt.org.
- ✓ Get in shape before the trip.
- ✓ Practice using your equipment.
- ✓ Study a topographic map and plan your itinerary.
- ✓ Plan the meals and then repackage the food to minimize bulk.
- ✓ Pack your bear container before you get to the trailhead.

Before you leave give your trip plans to someone at home:

- ✓ Names of people in the party and proposed itinerary.
- ✓ Your wilderness permit reservation number.
- ✓ Make of car and license number that will be left at the trailhead.
- ✓ Entry trail and date and exit trail and date.
- ✓ If you need to report someone overdue by more than 24 hours: call the County Sheriff's office nearest to the area that you are visiting (see contact information on page 2).

Some essential equipment:

- ✓ Water
- ✓ Warm clothing and rain gear
- ✓ Sunscreen and hat
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Map and compass/GPS or
- ✓ Mapping handheld GPS
- ✓ Headlamp and extra batteries
- ✓ First Aid kit
- ✓ Extra Food
- ✓ Emergency blanket
- ✓ Tent
- ✓ Stove
- ✓ Sleeping bag and pad
- ✓ Proper food storage equipment

Check trail conditions before you get there and decide if you may also need:

- ✓ Ice axe, crampons, helmet
- ✓ Skis or snowshoes
- ✓ Avalanche beacon, probe and snow shovel