Camping with Stock

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

Bridgeport & Carson Ranger Districts

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United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Intermountain Region
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

Leave No Trace

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Camp and Travel on Durable Surfaces
- Pack-It-In, Pack-It-Out
- Properly Dispose of What You Cannot Pack Out
- Minimize Use and Impact of Fires
- Leave What You Find

When it comes to stock use in the backcountry, lightweight gear and careful planning of food and supplies will help reduce negative impact to the environment. Following are four key areas where you can minimize stock impact:

- On the Trail
- Restraints
- Supplemental Feed
- Camps

On the Trail

Maintained trails in the Mount Rose, Carson-Iceberg, Mokelumne and Hoover Wildernesses, as well as in Davis Creek County Park and Washoe Lake State Park, are open to stock use. Except when entering your camp, always stay on established trails.

When sharing trails with hikers and bicyclists, the horse and rider have the right-of-way. However, many trail users are unfamiliar with stock use and unsure of what to do when they meet on the trail. As the stock user, you can make the best of the situation by instructing the hiker or the bicyclist in a friendly manner to step off the trail to the downhill side. Be sure to let them know how far they need to be off the trail to be out of your way.

PLEASE NOTE: Bicycles are prohibited in Wilderness Areas.

Restraints

The backcountry is no place to train your horse to a new method of restraint. Whichever method you choose, be sure your horse is familiar with it before you hit the trail.

Watering stock

Water stock at an established ford or natural low spot in the bank of the water source. For their safety and to protect embankments, restrained stock should not have access to bodies of water.

Camp Restraints

Stock should be in camp only during saddling and unsaddling, packing and unpacking. Otherwise, they should be kept outside the immediate camp area. The methods listed below are presented from lesser to greater impact on the environment:

Highlines

To construct a highline, locate an area with a dry hardpacked surface where the least amount of ground cover will be disturbed. Stretch a rope, approximately horse head high, between two trees of at least 8 inches in diameter. To ensure the highline doesn't girdle the tree, protect the bark with padding.

Portable electric fencing

This restraint method is an effective way to create a temporary corral. Because no trees are required, it is ideal for use in the high desert.

Tying to trees

Stock should be tied to a tree only temporarily to prevent damage to the tree root system. Select a sturdy tree of at least 8 inches in diameter. DO NOT TIE STOCK TO DEAD TREES!

Grazing Restraints

Dispersed, free roaming stock grazing on good grass will cause minimum long-term impact to the area. However, limiting movement during grazing is a major concern and cause of negative impact in the backcountry.

Hobbles

This method of restraint causes the least environmental impact. Since stock learn to move freely with hobbles, keep two wrangler stock in camp, using a highline or electric fence.

Electric fences

Electric fences are easy to set up and must be moved periodically to ensure that the enclosed area is not overgrazed.

Pickets

Picketing stock is hard on soil and vegetation, and is not allowed by Land Management agencies in some areas. Become familiar with local regulations and use good judgment when evaluating the grazing area near your camp. Choose a picket site carefully, make sure it is free of obstacles. Pack in your picket pins—do not cut trees to make them. Move the pins frequently to prevent overgrazing and trampling.

Supplemental Feed

We suggest bringing supplemental feed, even if the vegetation in the area you will camp seems adequate. A small ration of feed can be used as a bribe to remind stock that camp is home. Feed stock using nose bags, instead of spreading the feed on the ground. You will waste less feed and prevent pawing to reach the feed.

Processed and pelletized feed is handy and a good source of nutrition, especially for longer trips. Seeds from many weeds and non-native plant species can be found in many nonprocessed feeds. Because of this, there are regulations requiring the use of certified weed-free feed in certain areas. Check with one of the offices listed in this brochure for more information.

Camps

The areas listed below are not designated as horse camps, but as dispersed areas in the National Forest where stock use is allowed. These camps are accessible with stock trucks and trailers, are large enough to accommodate stock camps, and have access to water, usually nearby streams:

CARSON RANGER DISTRICT

✔ Hunting Camp #2
✔ Hunting Camp #4
✔ Wolf Creek
✔ Corral Valley Trailhead

BRIDGEPORT RANGER DISTRICT

✔ Green Creek - below the campground
✔ Molybdenite Creek - below the campground
✔ Mill Canyon

For More Information

Road and trail conditions can change from year to year and may cause temporary closure of an area. Contact the nearest Forest Service, State, or County Park office listed below for current conditions:

Carson Ranger District
1536 South Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701
(775) 882-2766

Bridgeport Ranger District
Highway 395
HCR1 Box 1000
Bridgeport, CA 93517
(760) 932-7070

Stanislaus National Forest
19777 Greenley Road
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 532-3671

Eldorado National Forest
Eldorado Information Center
3070 Camino Heights Drive
Camino, CA 95709
(530) 644-6048

Davis Creek County Regional Park
25 Davis Creek Road
Washoe Valley, NV 89704
(775) 849-0684

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
870 Emerald Bay Road, Suite 1
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
(530) 573-2600

Washoe Lake State Park
4855 East Lake Blvd.
Carson City, NV 89701
(775) 687-4319

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