

Golden Trout Wilderness

Sequoia National Forest



The 303,287 – acre Golden Trout Wilderness (GTW) was designated by Congress in 1978. Of this total, 111,146 acres is on the Sequoia National Forest, and the remainder on the Inyo National Forest.

WILDERNESS: “...an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” It is important we preserve the natural condition of wilderness.

NOMENCLATURE: The Golden Trout Wilderness was named for the brightly colored native golden trout (California State fish). Two subspecies are recognized; South Fork Kern golden trout and the Little Kern golden trout. Both are found in the GTW.

DESCRIPTION: On the Sequoia National Forest portion of the GTW, elevations range from 4,700 feet at the Forks of the Kern River to 12,432 feet on Mt. Florence, the highest peak on the Forest. Vegetation ranges from grey and pinyon pine woodlands at lower elevations; extensive Jeffrey pine forests at mid-elevations; and red fir, lodgepole and foxtail pine at higher elevations. Portions of the GTW occur above timberline. Most of the Little Kern River drainage lies within the Wilderness. The North and South Forks of the Kern Wild and Scenic rivers bisect this Wilderness.

LOCATION AND ACCESS: The GTW that lies within Sequoia National Forest is bordered in part by Sequoia National Park on the north, and Mountain Home State Forest on the west. Approximately 150 miles of trails for horses and hikers are located on the Sequoia National Forest portion. These trails can be accessed from Hwy 190 near Quaking Aspen via Forest Service Road 21S50 which leads to Summit, Clicks and Lewis Camp trailheads; Lloyd Meadow Road (Road 22S82) which leads to Jerkey and Forks of the Kern trailheads; Balch Park road to Mountain Home State Forest, Shake Camp trailhead; Sherman Pass Road or Hwy 395 via Nine Mile Road to Blackrock trailhead.

FISHING AND HUNTING: Special California Fish and Game restrictions apply in the GTW when fishing. **Only artificial lures with barbless hooks may be used; LIMITS VARY. Check current California Fish and Game regulations for specifics.** Fishing season in the GTW is open the last Saturday in April through November 15. **Hunting is allowed in season. Check current California Fish and Game regulations.**

DRINKING WATER: Water is available but should be used after proper treatment. It is recommended that water be boiled for 5 minutes and /or filtered prior to use.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING: You may encounter cattle grazing which has been a part of the local scene for a hundred years or more. Most present day trails were originally established by stockmen many years ago before areas were designated as Wilderness areas. The historical “old west” culture survives today as a vital, active and unique component of the area. It is perpetuated by present day cattlemen as they drive their stock over historic trails, use pack-stock to supply cowcamps built of native materials, and cook over woodstoves by lantern light as their ancestors did in the 1800’s with some important exceptions.

Livestock operations are now controlled by a permit system based on guidelines established in Grazing Allotment Management Plans and Forest Land and Resource Management Plans.

WILDERNESS ETHICS: Practice **LEAVE NO TRACE!** Please stay on the trail; cutting switchbacks causes erosion. If you have to hike off trail, please hike on durable surfaces and avoid fragile areas such as meadows. Select a campsite on a hard dry surface such as rock, sand, gravel, or pine needle duff, not on vegetation or meadows. Make sure that your campsite is at least 100 feet from water sources and trails. Pack out all you pack in. Bury body waste at least 6 inches deep and 100 feet from rivers and streams. Keep fires small and make sure they’re DEAD OUT when you leave.

PROPER USE OF STOCK: Avoid overgrazing in meadows, excessive trampling and polluting waterways. Between July 1 and October 1, good forage is usually available throughout the mountain meadows, but you need to pack in enough pellets or grain to provide daily supplements to green forage. For trips before or after these dates, plan on packing in all feed requirements.

Utilizing a hard ground area, tie pack and saddle stock a minimum 100 feet from lakes, streams, trails or campsites. Preferred method would be to construct a hitch line between two trees 8 inches in diameter or more, tying horses to the hitch line. Move hitch line daily. Loose herding of stock is prohibited except in areas unsafe to tie together. Scatter manure to prevent odor and fly problems. Take proper precautions to prevent damage to trees, plants and soil from pawing and trampling.

WILDERNESS REGULATIONS: All mechanized vehicles and equipment including mountain bikes are prohibited within the Wilderness. A maximum group size of 15 people / 25 head of stock per party has been adopted.

WILDERNESS PERMITS: Visitors to the GTW must obtain a Wilderness Permit if they plan on staying overnight. Campfire permits are also needed and you need to check for current fire regulations; restrictions may be in effect. These permits are FREE and can be obtained from the offices listed on this page. Permits can be mailed or faxed in advance, if points of entry/exit and days of travel are known.

Permits for travel into the GTW from these trailheads - Cottonwood Basin, Cottonwood Pass, and Whitney Portal - must be issued by the Inyo National Forest, and quotas may be in effect. Call (760) 873-3773 for permit reservations.

Current information and required permits for all other trailheads are available at any of the following locations. A combination road, trail and topo map of the GTW is available for \$8.75 upon request.

Sequoia National Forest
1839 S. Newcomb
Porterville, CA 93257
(559) 784-1500

Kern River Ranger District
105 Whitney Road
Kernville, CA 93238
(760) 376-3781

Kern River Ranger District
4875 Ponderosa Drive
Lake Isabella, CA 93240
(760) 379-5646

Western Divide Ranger District
32588 Highway 190
Springville, CA 93265
(559) 539-2607
(559) 539-2607 ext 285 (TTY)

www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia
www.fs.fed.us/r5/inyo

Mt. Whitney Ranger District
640 S. Main Street
Lone Pine, CA 93545
(760) 876-6200



Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region

Western Divide Ranger District
Sequoia National Forest

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