

Regulations

The following acts are prohibited specific to the Mokelumne:

- Camping within the Mokelumne Wilderness Area any time of the year without a valid wilderness permit. 36 CFR 261.58(e)
- Camping within 100 feet of any stream, lake, or designated trail in the Mokelumne Wilderness Area. 36 CFR 261.58(e)
- Disposing of bodily waste and wash water waste within 200 feet of any water source. 36 CFR 261.57(g)
- Entering or being in the Mokelumne Wilderness as part of a group that includes more than 12 persons per group for day use or eight persons per group for overnight use. 36 CFR 261.58(f)
- Building, maintaining, attending, or using a wood fire for any purpose within the Mokelumne Wilderness boundaries at any time of the year. 36 CFR 261.52(a)
- Grazing pack or saddle stock within 200 feet of a lake, stream, trails, or campsite. 36 CFR 261.57(e)
- Hitching or tethering pack or saddle stock to trees, or hitching, tethering, or hobbling pack or saddle stock within 200 feet of a lake, stream, trail, or campsite, except while loading and unloading. 36 CFR 261.58(aa)
- Grazing a horse or other saddle or pack animal within the Round Top Special Interest Area. 36 CFR 261.57(e)
- Possessing animals as described below:
  - a. Riding or allowing a horse or other saddle or pack animal off National Forest System trails within the Round Top Special Interest Area.
  - b. Possessing more than 12 horses or other saddle or pack animals per group within the Mokelumne Wilderness Area.
  - c. Possessing any dog not on a leash in the Carson Pass Management Area. 36 CFR 261.58(s)
- Camping in the areas listed below:
  - Outside of a designated campsite in the Carson Pass Management Area from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
  - Within 300 feet of Emigrant Lake, except when there is [12 in of] snow on the ground.
  - Within ¼ mile of Frog Lake. 36 CFR 261.58(e)
- Camping within a designated campsite at Winnemucca and Round Top Lakes for more than two consecutive nights or within a designated camping site at Fourth of July Lake for more than three (3) consecutive nights. 36 CFR 261.58(e)

The following apply to all Wilderness areas:

- Constructing items such as rock walls, structures, tables, or permanent improvements of any kind is prohibited.
- Do not take shortcuts at trail switchbacks.
- Drone usage is prohibited in Wilderness areas.

- Mechanized and motorized equipment, including strollers, bicycles, carts, and chainsaws are prohibited. Non-motorized mobility devices may be utilized.
- You are prohibited from leaving any property, including camping gear, food or other provisions, unattended for longer than 24 hours.
- Discharging firearms is permitted only for licensed hunters taking game during appropriate hunting seasons.
- Dogs must be under direct control at all times.
- Do not use any soap in lakes or streams. Wash using a bucket at least 200 feet from surface water.
- Your food and other scented items (including trash) must always be secured and inaccessible to animals.
- Pack out trash– including food scraps and toilet paper. Do not burn or bury.

The Mokelumne Wilderness is managed by the Eldorado National Forest. This guide was created for the convenience of Stanislaus National Forest users. More questions? Please contact any of the offices below:

The Stanislaus National Forest issues permits for the Mokelumne Wilderness at the Calaveras Ranger District and Summit Ranger District offices.

The Eldorado National Forest issues permits for the Mokelumne at these locations:

<b>Amador Ranger Station</b>	<b>Placerville Ranger District</b>
26820 Silver Drive	4260 Eight Mile Road
Pioneer, CA 95666	Camino, CA 95709
(209) 259-3774	(530) 644-2324

Permits for the Carson Pass Management Area (CPMA) are only issued at:

**Carson Pass Information Station**  
CA-88, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150, at Carson Pass.  
(209) 258-8606  
Open only in summer.

Contact Us:

<b>Supervisor’s Office</b>	<b>Groveland Ranger District</b>
<b>Stanislaus National Forest</b>	<b>Highway 120 Corridor</b>
19777 Greenley Road	24545 Highway 120
Sonora, CA 95370	Groveland, CA 95321
(209) 532-3671	(209) 962-7825
<b>Summit Mi-Wok District</b>	<b>Calaveras Ranger District</b>
<b>Highway 108 Corridor</b>	<b>Highway 4 Corridor</b>
1 Pinecrest Lake Rd	5519 Highway 4
Pinecrest, CA 95364	Hathaway Pines, CA 95223
(209) 965-3434	(209) 795-1381

Most offices are open Monday through Friday, call or visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/stanislaus> for current hours.



Forest Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mokelumne Wilderness  
Stanislaus National Forest

A 105,165-acre area that straddles the crest of the central Sierra Nevada, within the Stanislaus, Eldorado, and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests, the Mokelumne Wilderness is a wild landscape of great scenic beauty. Much of the area is dominated by volcanic ridges and granitic peaks, but the prominent feature is the rugged Mokelumne River Canyon. There are many smaller streams flowing through the deep, glaciated canyons but only a few lakes exist, concentrated in the northern portion of this spectacular area. Watersheds drain to the Mokelumne River on the west slope and the Carson River on the east slope. Elevations range from about 3,900 feet near Salt Springs Reservoir to 10,380 feet at Round Top.

What’s in a Wilderness?

The Wilderness Act of 1964 states that Wilderness is to be "protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and . . . has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation". The Mokelumne Wilderness is managed according to the Act to "ensure an enduring resource of Wilderness for present and future generations."

As a visitor to the Mokelumne Wilderness, you have the opportunity to experience solitude and nature in its most wild state, to enjoy spectacular scenery, and to hike, cross-country ski, ride horseback, or camp. These attractions and easy access from urban areas draw thousands of people to this Wilderness each year.

A Brief Profile of the Mokelumne

Pre-European contact, the area that contains the now Mokelumne Wilderness was inhabited and used for trade by Sierra Miwok and Washoe people for thousands of years. The Sierra Miwok lived and traded from the coast to the mountains, traveling and creating villages in the river valleys. The word "Mokelumne" is most often attributed to a Miwok dialect, meaning "people of the fishnets". The Washoe are the original occupants of the Lake Tahoe area but traveled further to hunt and gather resources, using the Mokelumne River Basin to trade acorns as far as the coast.

By the early 1850’s, expansion westward and the Gold Rush meant several wagon routes were pioneered over the Sierra Nevada: the Carson River Trail (also known as the Mormon Emigrant Trail) over Carson Pass, and Big Tree Road over Ebbetts Pass. Smaller trails were cut between them, and the region became popular for mining and grazing activities. But, as other routes and towns were established and industry became lucrative, the area fell into disuse.

The National Wilderness Preservation System was authorized by Congress in 1964, and in 1984 the boundaries of the Mokelumne Wilderness were expanded to their current state. It now includes two designated Natural Areas. The Round Top Botanical Area is unique as several botanical provinces meet and offer a magnificent display of wildflowers once the snow melts. The Round Top Geologic Area boasts extinct volcanoes and glacially carved lands– visit to view forces that created the Sierra Nevada.

In the Round Top region to the north and on the Mokelumne Plateau to the south the snowcaps typically linger into June, while (weather permitting) the Mokelumne River Canyon above Salt Springs Reservoir can be free of snow as early as March. Summers are generally dry and mild, but afternoon thunderstorms occur periodically, and nighttime temperatures may dip below freezing any time.

Wilderness Ethics

Human impacts can degrade and destroy wilderness resources, as well as detract from other visitors' wilderness experience. Many areas in the Mokelumne show dramatic, and sometimes irreversible, signs of heavy or improper use. Late snow melt, short growing seasons, and limited nutrient flow make for slow recovery of the Mokelumne’s alpine environment. Due to overcrowding, the delicate ecosystem experiences water quality degradation, destruction of vegetation, soil erosion, and dependence of wildlife on human food– all visitors must share in the responsibility of protecting these unique and fragile resources. To maintain a true, primitive Wilderness experience for all, recreation is limited to travel by foot, skis, or horseback– (and non-motorized mobility devices).



Wilderness Permits

- Overnight Use: A free wilderness permit is required year-round for overnight stays in the Mokelumne Wilderness. You can obtain a permit from one of the locations listed on the back page of this document. Permits not only provide important recreation use data, but they have also proven invaluable in search and rescue emergencies.
  - Group size - 8 people maximum in one group hiking or camping together. If your group size exceeds these limits, reduce the number of people, split the group to visit different areas, or visit an area which permits larger numbers. You are not permitted to camp or travel within one mile of a related group. If you have a larger group, please contact a ranger station for alternate recommendations.
  - Wilderness permits for the Carson Pass Management Area** (which includes Round Top, Winnemucca, and Fourth of July Lakes— camping is not permitted at Frog Lake) **can only be issued at the Carson Pass Information Station.** For more information about camping in this area, please see the Eldorado National Forest’s website.
- Day Use: No permit required.
  - Group size - 12 people maximum allowed hiking together.

Who can use a Wilderness?

Use is open to travel by foot and pack stock only. Mechanized and motorized equipment such as bicycles, hanggliders, over-snow vehicles, strollers, chainsaws, or game carts are prohibited. Non-motorized mobility devices are permissible.

Your Responsibilities on Trail

Cutting across trail switchbacks causes soil erosion and damages trails. Staying on trail is safer, easier and saves trail maintenance costs. Do not leave trail markers of any kind. Perhaps the most important aspect of the Wilderness experience is the quality of solitude— freedom from the intrusion of human sights, sounds, and odors. Help preserve this aspect for everyone who visits by observing a few considerations for your Wilderness neighbor. While hiking or camping, groups should separate as much as possible to minimize adverse impact on resources. Avoid acting boisterous or playing music. For both your and their safety, always give stock the right of way by moving well off the trail on the downhill side. If you are bringing a dog, you must pick up and dispose of their waste, make sure you know and adhere to leash laws for the county you are in. Dogs that accompany pack stock groups may be under voice control.

Campsites

Apart from the Carson Pass Management Area, the Wilderness is an open wonderland, you must be able to identify a campsite that follows Leave No Trace principles and Wilderness regulations. You are required to camp at least 100 feet from water sources and trails, (the stride length of an average height person is about two to three feet). At Emigrant Lake, you must be at least 300 feet (a football field) away from the water. Make every effort to find and use campsites that follow regulations. Camping on previously used sites creates far less impact than setting up in pristine areas. If no such site exists, camp on durable surfaces, do not camp in meadows or near stream beds. You may come across campsites that are too close to water and trails— do not use them. Do your part to steward the Wilderness and camp responsibly.

Stoves and Campfires

Campfires are PROHIBITED in the Mokelumne Wilderness. 36 C.F.R. 261.52(a)

If you are planning to operate a camp stove in the Wilderness, then you must obtain a campfire permit. The permit is free, valid until December 31 of the year you receive it, and may be obtained in person from Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or CalFire offices, and online at [www.readyforwildfire.org/permits](http://www.readyforwildfire.org/permits). Your responsibilities are explained on the campfire permit and must be adhered to, 36 CFR 261.52(k); PRC §4433.

Be aware that as fire danger becomes greater, additional restrictions may be enacted.

It is your responsibility to check for fire restrictions before you leave.

*Fires are no longer allowed in the Mokelumne Wilderness in part due to its growing popularity. The delicate alpine ecosystem necessitates balance, its dead and downed wood is a critical habitat for many native species and plays a valuable role in the nutritive density of the soils. The high alpine vegetation must survive in a low nutrient environment, harvesting wood for campfires is an unnecessary extravagance that campers can make do without.*

*Campfires themselves have become more and more dangerous as the forest conditions have gotten hotter and drier— this increases fire danger and the opportunities for a wildfire start. Given the remoteness of the wilderness area, access for fire suppression personnel and equipment is challenging at best, this increases the response time, and reduces the variety of resources we can utilize to fight wildfire.*

Sanitation

Human and canine feces left unburied or close to water can spread disease and contaminate water sources. Products are commercially available for you to take into the backcountry as a portable toilet kit, called "waste alleviation and gelling bags" or "WAG" bags and are now being required in some high alpine areas around the country. You may also bury human and canine feces: dig a cathole into dirt— minimum of six to eight inches deep, at least 200 feet from water, trails, and campsites. You must pack out tampons, sanitary napkins, disposable diapers, and any other refuse (including toilet paper and wipes).

Clean fish far from water and camp sites, at least 200 feet. Do not wash yourself, utensils, or clothing in lakes or streams. All soap pollutes water sources, even biodegradable soaps are a shock to fragile and pristine aquatic ecosystems. If you must wash dishes, carry a bucket of water at least 200 feet away from any water source, campsite, or trail; then wash and dispose of the dirty water in a cathole. Fill the hole before breaking camp.



Council's website for their up-to-date list of tested products) is the most effective method, given that it is appropriately used and kept at least 100 feet downwind from your campsite. Bear canisters are required in Yosemite National Park and the Hoover Wilderness.

The alternative is to properly hang your food, but this is an unreliable method as it leaves room for human error and bears will find any mistake a person makes.

If you are planning to hang your food, practice your technique before you leave home and make sure you are confident in your skill and using your equipment. Note that in alpine areas adequate trees to hang may not be readily available, and if they are, you must take extra care not to damage them as organisms in these low nutrient environments can take years to recover.

Contact someone at a ranger station to report any concerning bear behavior or if a bear obtains a food reward.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Seven Principles

 Plan Ahead & Prepare

 Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces

 Dispose of Waste Properly

 Leave What You Find

 Minimize Campfire Impacts

 Respect Wildlife

 Be Considerate of Others



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Food Storage and Bear Safety

Anything that goes in your body or on your body should be secured at all times. This means that those items should be either in your pack that is on your back, in a bear resistant food container, or properly hung. Never leave a pack with food or scented items unattended.

You must store your food, trash, and any other scented items such that they are inaccessible to wildlife. A bear resistant food container (see the *Interagency Grizzly Bear*

