

Dispersed Camping

ROG 16-03 2/2020



Dispersed camping occurs in less developed areas where no services are offered. There are no picnic tables, metal fire rings or garbage service. Also, there are no designated camping or parking areas provided. The maximum length of stay in a forest ranger district is 21 days per year. We ask all visitors to practice good outdoor ethics about camping, travel and behavior while they are visiting. Dispersed campers are allowed to park within one vehicle length (including any tow vehicle) of a National Forest transportation route and walk in to camp.

Dispersed camping is not allowed in these areas:

- within one mile of Pinecrest Basin;
- along the Clark Fork Road (7N83);
- along Hwy 108 between Clark Fork Road and Kennedy Meadows Road.

Campsites

Use existing campsites in lieu of clearing new sites. Although it's natural for campers to want to stay near water sources, camp at least 100 feet away from edges of meadows, lakes streams or rivers to minimize damage to critical wildlife and riparian areas.

Creek beds are not trails, but they can serve as valuable navigation guides. Use existing trails instead of breaking new ones or compacting creek beds.

Keep a clean campsite. Secure food, preferably in airtight containers. If food is left out, bears and other wildlife will seek it out and eat it. Any item with an odor is a potential food source for a wild animal. You may store your food in the car, but be sure it can't be seen or its odor detected.

Many outdoor enthusiasts rely on bear proof canisters to protect their food supplies. You may purchase them at most outdoor gear stores. They are lightweight and effectively protect whatever's inside. Although it may be one more camping purchase, your vacation will be short-lived if bears get to your food cache at the beginning of your stay.

Sanitation

Campers are encouraged to Pack it in, Pack it out. Taking out more than you brought is even better! This helps reduce recreational impacts on the forest. Litter and garbage are unsightly, unsanitary and is harmful to wildlife and fish populations. Clean dishes at least 100 feet away from water sources. Place food scraps either in a closed container (to take with you when departing) or dispose of them in an area that does not invite wild animals. Human feces left unburied or close to water can spread disease and contaminate water sources. Bury feces in a hole six to eight inches deep, at least 100 feet from water, trails and campsites. Pack out tampons, sanitary napkins, diapers and any refuse.

Campfires

Before you depart for your trip to the Stanislaus, check with fire officials or Forest Service personnel to learn whether the area you plan to visit has any campfire restrictions. You will need a campfire permit, even if seasonal restrictions are not in effect. When it comes to campfires, carefully follow the instructions on the permit:

- Campfires should never be so large that it singes or burns overhead vegetation or throws off sparks.
- Campfires should be contained within rock fire rings.
- Use existing fire rings only. Please do not make new ones.
- Campfires should be surrounded by five feet of clearance in all directions, cleared to the soil.

Never leave campfires unattended for any reason. Campfire permits require a shovel and water nearby for putting out fires. Make sure the fire is dead out by drowning with water, stirring with shovel and feeling for heat with hands. You may obtain a campfire permit on line at:

www.preventwildfireca.org.



Travel and access into the forest

Traveling and access deep into the Forest is determined by weather, safety and seasonal road closures. The Motor Vehicle Use Map, or MVUM, displays seasonal openings of National Forest roads and trails designated for motorized travel use. It is best used in conjunction with a forest visitor map. The MVUMs are free to the public at each ranger district office.

All motorized vehicles using forest roads must be registered with California's DMV either as street-legal (meets requirements for operating on a public thoroughfare) or as a "green sticker" vehicle (OHVs such as dirt bikes, ATVs, dune buggies and snowmobiles that meet emission standards). Most dirt roads in the forest are maintained in a roughly graded condition. Except for snowmobiles, green-sticker vehicles are restricted to these types of roads and some gravel roads. Ranger districts have free maps that illustrate permissible areas for OHV use, or you may download them from our website at: www.fs.usda.gov/activity/stanislaus/recreation/ohv

Visitors should always consult road signs on forest roads to confirm what vehicle use is allowed on a given road. Not all traveled ways are open to the public. Some forest roads are gated or blocked by obstacles such as boulders, logs or dirt piles.

Other areas may appear to have been roads at one time but show no signs of recent travel. Many of these are old logging skid trails that were never intended for vehicle use. As a rule of thumb, if a route is not designated "closed" by sign or other obvious intent to bar use by vehicles, the visitor may assume the route is open for use.

Dry meadows can often seem inviting to cross with an OHV, but doing so creates heavy resource



damage. Visitors should avoid driving over grasses, brush, trees or any other vegetation for the same reason.

Driving in wet areas is never acceptable, except for designated stream crossings on approved roads. Each pass of a tire over wet terrain redefines the unwanted track, sending a mark others may believe permits vehicular travel in that area. This translates into more resource damage in areas where there should be none.

If you have any questions about dispersed camping or any other topic, please call either the Forest Supervisor's office or the any ranger district nearest to the area you plan to visit:

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

Calaveras Ranger District
5519 Hwy 4
PO Box 500
Hathaway Pines, CA 95323
(209) 795-1381

Summit Ranger District
#1 Pinecrest Lake Road
Pinecrest, CA 95364
(209) 965-3434

Groveland Ranger District
24545 Highway 120
Groveland, CA 95321
(209) 962-7825

