

How to obtain an overnight permit for Desolation Wilderness

1) Pre-trip Planning:

- Carefully review Desolation Wilderness [rules and regulations](#).
- Consider the size of your group and the skill level of the least experienced person in your group.
- If you have a large group, you may want to consider areas outside of designated wilderness. Forest Service staff can help with suggestions.
- Determine the [Destination Zone](#) (the place you want to camp) for your first night stay. Look at the [Zone Map](#) to determine desired zone.
- Review the [Zone Quota](#) information to determine if there is space available for your party size in the desired zone. Many zones have a quota less than the maximum group size is 12.
- Determine your date of entry and exit and what trailheads you would like to enter and exit from.
- Consider what the weather may be like and the possibility there may still be a significant amount of snow cover into late-June.
- For busy periods (weekends between July 4th and Labor Day), have at least one alternative for both the zone and date.

2) Reserving an overnight permit in advance (70% of available quota)

- Reservations for Desolation Wilderness overnight permits are available through the National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS) at Recreation.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777. Reservations are available from one day up to 6 months in advance of entry date.
- During the quota season (Friday before Memorial Day to September 30th), 70% of the quota for each Destination Zone is available for advanced reservations.

A) Online

- Navigate to www.recreation.gov
- Type “Desolation Wilderness” into the “Where?” box at the left of the page. A dropdown list will appear, click on “Desolation Wilderness Permit, Eldorado National Forest” and then click on the “Search” button.
- Click on the “Desolation Wilderness Permit” title.
- From this page,
 - Gain more information about the area, scroll down for links to rules and regulations and other informative websites;
 - Click the [“Permit Area Map”](#) tab to view the map or scroll to bottom for a printable version;

- Click on "[Destination Zone List](#)" to review list of zones; or
 - Click on "[Date Range Availability](#)" to enter desired dates.
- Select the "Type of Permit" and the "Destination Zone" from the drop down menu on the left of the screen.
- Enter "Specific" date of entry. You may also search a "Range" of dates if your entry date is flexible and check other Destination Zones for availability. Click "Search."
- If you searched a range of dates or multiple Destination Zones, click on the box below the date on the Destination Zone you would like to camp the first night.
- Click on the "Book Permit" button to begin reserving your permit.
- Set up an account if you do not already have one or log in to an existing account.
- Follow instructions to enter information to complete your application. You will need to know the following:
 - Entry and Exit Trailhead (the place you want to start and end your trip)
 - Exit Date
 - Trip Itinerary (list of likely camping locations within zone, can enter "don't know" after 1st night)
 - Group Size (# Adults [over 12 yrs]; # Annual Fee Card holders; # Children 12 and under)
 - Method of Travel (Foot, Riding [horse or mule], Stock [mule, llama, goat, etc.])
 - Animals/Type (Max of 2 per person and 12 per group)
 - Dog? (Are you bringing a dog along)
 - How you will get your permit (Online or pick up at permit office)
 - Alternate Trip Leader (if applicable)
- Click the check box at the bottom of the screen "Yes, I have read and understood this important information." **Important**—As the trip leader, you are agreeing that you know and understand Desolation Wilderness rules and regulations, that you will be a wilderness partner in following those rules, and that you will ensure the rest of your group will do the same.
- Click "Continue to Shopping Cart."
- Carefully review your order for correct Destination Zone, Entry Date, and Group Size. If correct, click "Checkout Shopping Cart," if not correct, click "Change Details."
- Enter payment information (only credit and debit cards are accepted online).
- Click on the checkbox that you have reviewed your reservation for accuracy and understand cancellation and change policies. Click "Complete This Purchase."
- You will receive a Confirmation Letter by email. **This is NOT your permit.**

Printing Your Permit

- Log back into your account within 14 days of your entry date to print your permit.
- Click on “Current Reservations” on the left side.
- Find Desolation Wilderness Permit and click on “See Detail”
- Click on “Print Permit”
- Check the box that you agree to abide by Desolation Wilderness Rules and Regulations then click “Proceed with Printing.”
- Click on “Print the Page,” sign your permit and carry it with you at all times on your trip.
- If you do not have access to a printer, have problems printing your permit, or elected to pick up your permit, bring your confirmation letter with photo ID to a Forest Service permit office to pick up a permit.
- If your trip itinerary includes parking at Pyramid Creek (aka Twin Bridges or Horsetail Falls) or Eagle Falls, you will also need to print your parking pass to display on your dash at the trailhead.
- Don’t forget to review and sign your permit. Carry it with you at all times during your trip.

B) By Phone

- Review Pre-planning tips listed above and other information provided on the website. If you have questions, call one of the Forest Service permit offices listed below.
- Have your trip details prepared, including Entry Date, Exit Date, Group Size (including those 12 yrs or under), Destination Zone, Entry and Exit Trailhead, and number of nights. Have alternatives planned in advance.
- Call the National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS) at 1-877-444-6777. Call Center hours are: Summer, 7:00 am to 9:00 pm (Pacific Time); Winter: 7:00 am to 7:00 pm (Pacific Time).
- Reserve your permit working with the Call Center representative (only credit and debit cards are accepted over the phone).
- Confirmation letter can be sent by email or by postal service.
- Within 14 days of your Date of Entry, log on to the Recreation.gov website to print your permit or bring your confirmation letter and photo ID to a Forest Service permit office to pick it up.
- Review and sign your permit. Carry your permit at all times during your trip.

C) In Person

- Review Pre-planning tips listed above and other information provided on the website.

- Visit a Forest Service permit office and work with a Visitor Information Assistant to reserve your permit. Cash, checks, money orders, and credit/debit cards are accepted in person at Forest Service offices.
- If your reservation is more than 14 days in advance of your date of entry, you will need to return to a Forest Service permit office or log into the Recreation.gov website to print your permit.

3) Overnight permit on the date of entry (First come, first served)

- During the quota season (Friday before Memorial Day to September 30th), 30% of the quota for each Destination Zone is available at Forest Service permit offices on a first come, first served basis on the date of entry. In addition, any quota that was not reserved in advance would also become available.
- Visit a Forest Service permit office during office hours on the date you would like to enter Desolation Wilderness and pick up your permit in person. Credit/debit cards (preferred), cash, checks, and money orders are accepted in person at Forest Service offices.

Forest Service Permit Offices

- Pacific Ranger Station, 7887 Highway 50, 3 miles east of Pollock Pines, 530-647-5415.
Summer: 8:00am to 4:30pm 7 days/wk; Winter: 8:00am to 4:30pm M-F
- Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Supervisor's Office, 35 College Dr, South Lake Tahoe, 530-543-2600
8:00am to 4:30pm M-F
- Taylor Creek Visitor Center, Highway 89 3 miles north of Highway 50 intersection on South Shore of Lake Tahoe, 530-543-2674
Summer: 8:00am to 4:30pm 7 days/wk; extended hours Memorial Day to Labor Day
- LTBMU, North Shore Office, 855 Alder Ave, Incline Village, NV, 775-831-0914
8:00am to 4:30pm Th-Sun