

Change is Coming to the Mount Whitney Lottery ~2011

For 2011 the application period will be extended.

Applications postmarked **February 1 to March 15, 2011 will be accepted.**

New software is in development for 2012 that should allow a future lottery that is paperless with online application forms and email notification of results.

Until then, join us in 2011 for one more year of the traditional lottery process...

How do we do it? Applications are drawn from a really big box filled with paper application forms that are stirred into random order. On **February 16** we begin making reservations from the application pool. Applications received February 16 or later are stirred into the application pool each day. Every application is drawn and considered. This process will take 6 weeks or more. When your application is drawn, a reservation is made if space is still available for the entry date and group size you requested. Please be sure that your application is accurate and complete before you mail it. We cannot revise, intercept, or confirm the status of applications.

Results will be sent by mail, usually after April 1.

Submission of an application indicates your agreement to the Mt Whitney Lottery Terms and Conditions, so be sure to review those terms and conditions included with the application form.

Questions? Call the Inyo National Forest Wilderness Permit Office staff at ~ 760-873-2483

Phone line hours are 8am to 4:30. Winter schedule~ closed on weekends and holidays. After May 15 we will be open every day for the summer schedule.

**Wilderness permits are required year round for Mt. Whitney,
but some of these permits are NOT in the lottery.**

If you want a reservation,

Here are 3 questions to determine if your trip is in the lottery.

Question 1. When does your trip begin?

For trips that begin during the quota period of May 1 through November 1, Continue to Question 2

- Winter season trips for day use and overnight/ multi-night are not reserved in the lottery. Self issue permits can be issued at the Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center for trips that begin before May 1 or after November 1.

Question 2. Is your trip a Day Hike?

Enter the lottery to reserve a Day Use Permit.

See more information about day hikes below and under Wilderness Permit Definitions.

- A Day Use permit is required if the entire trip will be on one calendar date and you will enter any part of the Mt. Whitney Zone.
- A Day Use permit is valid for any route, including access to Mountaineer's Route, East Face/Buttress routes, Mt Russell.

Question 3. Overnight trips ~Where does your trip begin? (Overnight includes 1 or more nights)

Enter the lottery if you are entering the Mt. Whitney Zone on the Mt. Whitney Trail. (not the NF of Lone Pine)

See the questions below for how to reserve other types of overnight permits.

Does your trip start in a National Park? Permits for trips starting in Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon

National Parks are not in the lottery. Obtain these permits from the park where your trip begins.

My trip is starting on an Inyo National Forest trail and ending at Whitney Portal via Trail Crest; do I need to enter the lottery? No, your reservation is not in the lottery, however an additional exit quota for coming out at Mt. Whitney will apply to your exit date. These dates fill quickly, starting 6 months in advance of the trip.

You can reserve the entry trail you are starting on, be sure to request "Trail Crest Exit" with the reservation.

Scroll down for Wilderness Permit Definitions and other common Mt. Whitney questions

When will the trail be clear of snow?

- Expect the switchbacks above Trail Camp to be covered by snow and ice through the end of June or early July.
- Snow may cover the trail again in late September or October.
- During early spring, late fall and winter, trails will be partially or entirely covered with snow or ice.

Winter mountaineering skills, experience and equipment are essential for a safe excursion when ice and snow are on the Mt. Whitney Trail.

I'm going on a multi-night trip; do I also need a day use permit for the day we will summit?

- No, the overnight permit is valid for your summit day; **day use permits** are only for people who are doing their entire trip on one day.

I'm not going all the way to the summit, do I need a permit?

- Day hiking anywhere in the Mt. Whitney Zone requires a permit.
- If you are overnight anywhere in the wilderness boundary you need a wilderness permit for the area you are entering. Camping near Lone Pine Lake requires a Mt. Whitney Overnight Permit.

My trip to Mt Whitney is not using the regular Mt Whitney trail to the summit; do I need to enter the lottery?

- If you are day hiking, YES, day use permits for all routes are reserved by the lottery.
- If your trip is overnight and starting on a trail other than the Mt Whitney Trail, NO your trip is not in the lottery, follow the directions for reserving the entry trail you are starting on. This includes the Mountaineers Route up the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek and entry points for the John Muir Trail, like Kearsarge Pass.

What should I put for my exit trail? If you are coming back to Whitney Portal to end your trip, you can put "SAME" or "Mt. Whitney Trail". If you will continue your trip to exit elsewhere, indicate where your trip will end. Example: John Muir Trail hikers going to Yosemite would indicate Happy Isles- Yosemite.

Where do I pick up the permit? Mt Whitney Wilderness Permits must be picked up at:

Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center

at the junction of Highway 395 and SR 136.

Visitor Center phone (760) 876-6200.

Open Daily (winter-8am to 5pm; summer 8am to 6pm)

Why does the calendar of Mt Whitney available dates show last year?

- The calendars were rolled back to show what dates had space left after the 2010 lottery was complete.
- Hopefully this information will be helpful to groups planning to enter the 2011 lottery.

How can I tell if you received my lottery application? You can use a mail service that has tracking or use the informal method of including a postcard (with stamp and your address on it). We will mail your postcard back to you with the date your application was accepted to the lottery.

Wilderness Permit Definitions

Day Use Permit: If the entire trip will be on one calendar date and you will enter the Mt. Whitney Zone, a Day Use permit is required. Day Use includes all routes (access to Mountaineer's Route, East Face/Buttress routes, Mt Russell). No consecutive day use, if the trip is more than one calendar date an Overnight permit is required.

Overnight / multi-night permit: Trips lasting one night or more that start on the Mt. Whitney trail require a Mt Whitney Overnight permit. This includes trips that will end elsewhere (i.e. Pacific Crest and John Muir trails). Day permit can not be used as part of an overnight trip to pass through the area. Overnight use does not include all routes. Entry via North Fork of Lone Pine Creek is a separate reservation that is not in the lottery (NF of Lone Pine Creek trail gives access to the Mountaineer's Route, East Face /Buttress & Mt. Russell).

Group Size: You are limited to the number of people indicated in your group size, with a maximum group size of 15 people. Large groups can not exceed 15 people even if they are on separate permits.

Entry Date: is the day you will begin walking on the trail. All of your group must start on the entry date listed on your permit. Your permit will not be valid if you miss your entry date. Do not include extra days you are staying at Whitney Portal Campground before you start on the trail.

Trail Crest Exit Quota: An additional quota limits the number of people to 25 people each day, that are finishing their trips at Mt. Whitney. A separate quota applies to trips that start on Inyo National Forest trails but did not originate in the Mt Whitney Zone. The quota applies to the date you end the trip at Whitney Portal. You are allowed to camp along the Mt. Whitney trail if you wish.