USDA United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Pinedale Ranger District | 29 East Fremont Lake Road
P.O. Box 220
Pinedale, WY 82941

**File Code:** 2320
**Date:** February 15, 2011

Boy Scouts of America

Dear BSA Group Leader:

The summer 2011 season is quickly approaching and I would like to touch base with your organization regarding special regulations for the Bridger Wilderness. Last season, my field staff contacted numerous Boy Scout Troops in the backcountry without required visitor permits, exceeding the group size limits, and camping too close to streams, lakes and trails. In both 2005 and 2006, the Boy Scouts made up almost 65% of the organized groups using the Bridger Wilderness. The Boy Scouts are quite recognizable in the backcountry, and we know that each troop strives to leave as little trace as possible. Unfortunately, our experience here in the Bridger Wilderness is that the Boy Scouts will violate more regulations and leave a bigger imprint on the resource than all other groups combined. In an effort to change this course, the Forest Service is attempting to reach out to the Boy Scout Councils, to make sure they are informed and educated to the regulations of the Bridger Wilderness, well in advance of their arrival in Pinedale, Wyoming. The Forest Service and the Boy Scout Councils need to work together to take care of our natural resources and provide a safe and experience for the Scouts that are visiting the Bridger Wilderness. Therefore, all organized groups are required to obtain a free visitor use permit from the Pinedale Ranger District for any travel into the Bridger Wilderness.

There is an application process to be completed at least 15 calendar days in advance of the scheduled trip departure date. Please keep in mind that once a group has received a permit for a certain area no other organized groups will be issued a visitor permit to camp in the same area. The application form is available on line at the Bridger-Teton National Forest Website (http://www.fs.fed.us/btnf). Accompanying this application must also be the pre-approved proper documentation from B.S.A. When the application has been reviewed and approved, the trip leader's signature on the permit acknowledges that they understand and will abide by the wilderness regulations. These are attached to each visitor permit.

Please note that the group size is limited to 15 individuals (including troop leaders) and 25 livestock. This regulation is strictly enforced to protect the wilderness resource. If an application is submitted that exceeds this limit, the application will be denied. Specific groups will need to submit a separate application with a separate itinerary and will adhere to the following requirements:

- Each group must either leave from a separate trailhead or leave from the same trailhead a minimum of two hours apart.
- Each camp location on the trip itinerary must be at least two miles away from the associated groups.

- Groups must not meet or pass each other during any portion of their trip (including having two groups hiking reverse directions on a loop hike).

The Bridger Wilderness receives a high amount of use during the summer and fall seasons. We endeavor to provide quality wilderness experiences for all visitors by promoting solitude and minimizing impacts to wilderness resources. Note the following specified areas traditionally receive a higher amount of use and/or do not have the topography to provide low impact or legal campsites for larger groups. Please do not apply for campsites at the following locations:

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| Miller Lake | Hobbs Lake | Titcomb Basin | North Lake |
| Eklund Lake | Seneca Lake | Indian Basin | Mary's Lake |
| Barbara Lake | Little Seneca Lake | Peak Lake | Ethel Lake |
| Arrowhead Lake | Trail Creek Park | Island Lake | |

You may wish to make a side note of additional locations and trailheads you are interested in while applying.

Great backcountry experiences, beautiful scenery, solitude and spectacular fishing are also available on our National Forest System lands outside designated wilderness where group size limits of 15 do not apply and only the 16-day stay limit applies.

We appreciate your time in completing both the Forest Service and BSA permits, and your willingness to meet our requirements. If you need any assistance or have any questions about the Bridger Wilderness or the Pinedale Ranger District, please call my office at 307-367-4326.

Sincerely,

PAUL HUTTA
Pinedale Acting District Ranger