

Frequently Asked Questions about the Mt. Whitney Lottery updated for 2017

Will there be parking at Whitney Portal? A wilderness permit does not guarantee a parking space. Please plan to carpool to minimize the number of cars in the parking lot. Longer trips should consider being dropped off by friends, or hire a shuttle service.

When will the trail be clear of snow? In a big snow year, the trail may not be clear until mid-July. Expect snow in May and June in average years. Snow may cover the trail again in late September or October. This year may have more snow than shown in this photo of [snow on the trail in June 2011](#). When ice or snow is on the trail, winter mountaineering skills, experience and equipment are essential for a safe trip. More information is found in "[Hiking the Mt Whitney Trail](#)".

How do I get the application form? The online lottery application will appear on the recreation.gov website starting on Feb 1 and will disappear again after March 15. Do not mail or fax applications. The lottery application is completed online.

What is reserved in the lottery? Two types of permits are in the lottery, Mt. Whitney Zone Day Use and Overnight on the Mt. Whitney Trail. Day and overnight are not interchangeable. Descriptions and details about the two permit types are on the [Mt Whitney Lottery / Reservation webpage](#).

Can I change my Mt Whitney lottery application? Once an application is submitted (cart checked out) you cannot make any changes to the information on the application.

- To change the entry date, entry trail or permit type, you must cancel the application and re-apply before March 15. You would pay the \$6 application fee again.
- Alternate leader names cannot be added or changed.
- During the acceptance period you can decline a date if you no longer want it.
- If space is available, changes to group size can be made on line beginning on April 1.
- Corrections to itinerary can be done when the permit is issued.
- Reservations cannot be resold or transferred to other groups. No credits. No rain checks.

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.

Do I need a separate reservation for each night of my trip? No, one permit covers your entire trip. You must have an overnight type permit to stay for multiple days. During the acceptance process you indicate how many nights you're staying and your final destination.

I'm not going all the way to the summit, do I still need a permit? Day hiking anywhere in the [Mt. Whitney Zone](#) requires a day use permit. If you are overnight anywhere in the wilderness boundary you need an overnight wilderness permit for the area you are entering.

What is the exit trail? If you are coming down on the Mt Whitney trail to end your trip at Whitney Portal, select "Mt. Whitney Trail". John Muir Trail hikers going through to Yosemite, indicate if you will finish at "Happy Isles- Yosemite" or "Tuolumne Meadows- Yosemite". Section hikers or trans-sierra trips, indicate your final destination and exit date so the permit is valid for your entire trip.

I want to camp near Lone Pine Lake and start into the Mt Whitney Zone the next day, what permit do I need? Camping near Lone Pine Lake requires a Mt. Whitney Trail Overnight Permit. Camping anywhere between the wilderness boundary and the Mt Whitney Zone boundary requires an overnight wilderness permit. Camping near Whitney Portal is restricted to developed campsites only.

Does the overnight permit include camping at Whitney Portal Campground? No, the campground is not in the wilderness. Make a campground reservation for nights you're staying in the campground.

How do I find out the lottery results? Log into your account at Recreation.gov and look for your lottery application in April. **The deadline to claim a date won in the lottery is April 30** (midnight Eastern Time). You must "Accept" and pay the \$15 per person reservation fee or the reservation will be canceled.

What do I need to do to Accept? You will need to verify the group size, complete some trip information and pay the \$15 per person reservation fee to claim your reservation.

- Itinerary: For overnight trips, complete your Exit Date and Exit Trail. **John Muir trail** hikers should indicate the final destination date and trail for the permit to include the entire trip.
- Verify group size: You can accept for a smaller number of people. If space is available, you can increase the group size. The reservation fee of \$15 per person will apply for the number of people accepted and must be paid to complete the acceptance process. 14 days before the trip you will need to verify the final group size again.
- Once you have checked out the cart and accepted a reservation, there is no refund. Reduced group size cannot be restored once the cart is checked out.

How do I get the permit? You must check in at the visitor center (near Lone Pine, CA. 93545) to pick up the permit. Your reservation will be canceled if you fail to complete the group size confirmation or pick up the permit before the No Show deadline.

- Overnight permit deadline is 10:00 am on the entry date.
- Day Use permit the deadline is noon, one day before the hike.

To hold your reservation past the no show deadline, you must verify your final group size one or two weeks before the trip. Completing the group size confirmation will save the reservation until close of business on the entry date. Call 760-873-2483 to confirm by phone. [Permit Pickup Instructions](#).

Are trips sponsored by an organization or non profit reserved in the lottery? Organizations or commercial groups must contact the wilderness permit office before applying for a Mt. Whitney Permit. Schools and non profit organizations may need a special use permit. Reserving a permit in the lottery does not guarantee approval. Commercial use of the Mt. Whitney trail and Trail Crest exit require special approval, so start planning well before the trip.

Still Have Wilderness Permit Questions?

For wilderness information or reservation assistance call Inyo National Forest Wilderness Permit Office:
(760) 873-2483 Phone line open 8am to 4:30

Winter schedule- closed on weekends and holidays.
May 15 to October 15- open every day.