



River Etiquette

Sequoia National Forest

Kern River Ranger District



Due to its ideal location and special beauty, the Kern River attracts a wide variety of people, including fishermen, hikers, sightseers, sunbathers, campers and whitewater boaters. In order for all of these diverse recreationists to share the river in harmony, it is essential that everyone shows consideration for others and adopts a cooperative, friendly attitude.

Because whitewater boaters pass within range of so many other users--as they drive shuttles, put in, take out and float down the river--it is especially important that they minimize their impact on others by practicing the skills of river etiquette. It really does feel good to be considerate of others! Here are a few tips to help whitewater boaters make their trips more enjoyable for all who share the wonderful Kern River.

Let's Keep the Noise Down:

Excitement is a part of river boating and a few hoots and hollers are appropriate. However, excessive yelling and screaming can be very annoying to riverside residents and others who have come to the river to relax. Keep the noise down when others are nearby and when floating past residential areas.

Be Courteous of Those Fishing:

When passing people fishing, be quiet, don't water fight, and if safety permits, move to the opposite side of the river.

Above all--with the possible exceptions of emergencies--avoid running over fishing lines and don't eddy-out near someone fishing. If you do (inadvertently) disrupt their activity, take time to apologize.

Respect Other's Space:

Every activity has a need for a certain amount of "space." Overcrowding is disturbing to everyone. However, overcrowding is perceived differently by different individuals. What may be quite acceptable to someone boating the river, may be seen as overcrowding by others.

When launching or taking out, use signed access points and avoid, if at all possible, walking through other people's campsites.

If you must pass through a site that is occupied, take a moment to walk over and politely ask if it would be okay to carry your gear through the camp.

Respect the privacy of others, and bear in mind that you may not be able to launch or take out exactly where you want.

When pulling ashore, avoid occupied beaches and dispersed recreation areas.

Private Property-- Don't Trespass:

Nearly all the riverbank below the community of Riverkern is private land.

Respect the property rights of private landowners and, except in emergencies, do not go ashore without the permission of the landowner. And, of course, keep your noise down.

Do not disturb any water diversion structures in or along the river.



Vehicle Parking:

Parking and loading spaces are very limited. Especially on the Upper Kern.

When using designated loading zones, load or unload as quickly as possible and then move your vehicle so others can use the area too.

When stopping along the road, get completely out of the roadway. If you can't get off the road, **DON'T STOP.**

When parking and leaving your vehicle, leave road arteries unrestricted and make sure other vehicles can get in and out.

Reduce the chance of a serious accident when loading or unloading by keeping people, as well as vehicles, well out of the roadway.

Do not park at take out points until your party has arrived.

Drive Slowly, Carefully:

Fast moving vehicles speeding around the blind curves of the narrow canyon road along the Kern River can be extremely hazardous. So drive slowly and carefully.

Remember, as rafters and kayakers, you are very visible to the local community. Your actions reflect on all boaters. A little bit of consideration and politeness can go a long way in building positive relations among all of the people who share the Kern.

Other Groups on the Water:

As you float downriver, never pass another group of boaters without first politely asking permission to do so. Avoid cutting into, and therefore breaking apart, another group's trip.

Be Cordial, Patient and have Fun!

Practice the golden rule: Treat others with the respect that you wish to receive. Thanks for caring, and have a safe, enjoyable trip!

This pamphlet on river etiquette was produced with the assistance of the permitted (listed alphabetically): Kern River Tours, Outdoor Adventures and Whitewater Voyages.

Please Practice Leave No Trace



- > Plan Ahead and Prepare
- > Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- > Dispose of Waste Properly
- > Leave What You Find
- > Minimize Campfire Impacts
- > Respect Wildlife
- > Be Considerate of Other Visitors

*To learn more and get involved
in your community, visit LNT.org*

**Thank you for your help in making forest visits
enjoyable and safe! Plan ahead by obtaining a
National Forest map at one of the following offices:**

Kern River Ranger District
11380 Kernville Rd.
Kernville, CA 93238
[760-376-3781](tel:760-376-3781)

Forest Supervisor's Office
220 East Morton Ave
Porterville, CA 93257
[559-784-1500](tel:559-784-1500)

