



OBTAINING A WILDERNESS PERMIT

Sierra National Forest

The Sierra National Forest encompasses 1.3 million acres of which 528,000 acres are Congressionally designated Wilderness. The California Wilderness Act of 1984 added almost 227,000 acres to that total. The Sierra has five wilderness areas: Ansel Adams, John Muir, Dinkey Lakes, Kaiser, and Monarch. Each wilderness area has its own character and beauty. All are managed with special rules and regulations to protect their ecosystems and preserve the wilderness experience. A Wilderness Permit is required for all overnight trips into any designated wilderness areas and a separate permit is required for each trip. A Wilderness Permit is not required for day hikes. Inquire about site specific closures, campfire restrictions, grazing restrictions, and food storage requirements prior to planning your wilderness trip.

A daily entry quota system is in effect for all wilderness areas to protect natural resources and to preserve the quality of the wilderness experience. The Wilderness Act requires that wilderness areas "shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people on such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness." The land can only support a certain number of visitors. When excessive use occurs, the opportunity for solitude decreases, vegetation is damaged, erosion is accelerated, and the risk of water pollution increases. During the period of heaviest use, there are wilderness trail entry quotas. The maximum group size is 15 people and 25 head of stock. For the Ansel Adams, John Muir, Dinkey Lakes, and Kaiser are in effect from May 1st through November 1st.

All wilderness permits must be obtained online at www.recreation.gov. Permits can be reserved 6 months in advance for the first 60% of the quota. The remaining ("walk-up") 40% of the quota will be released 2 weeks prior to any entry date. These "walk-up" permits are reserved just the same as the rest of the quota; you do not need to physically "walk up" to the office. Example: Cliff Lake has a total quota of 20 permits per day. Say you are looking at starting a trip on July 1st. 12 permits would be released on Recreation.gov on January 1st (6 months ahead of start date). Then, the remaining 8 permits will be released on June 15th (2 weeks ahead of start date). Reservations are \$6 per permit and then \$5 per person on the permit. Example: A permit for one person would be \$11; two people would be \$16 and so on. The number of days your trip lasts does not affect the cost. Permits cancelled 12 days prior to start date are eligible for a partial refund.

Reserved permits may be picked up 48 hours in advance at the location indicated on your confirmation. Permits may not be printed at home, emailed, or mailed to the holder; all permits will either be picked up during office hours at the High Sierra District Station in Prather or Bass Lake Station in North Fork . Please call ahead to make arrangements if after hours pick up is needed. Permits can be left in the night drop box at either location.

CONTACT INFORMATION

High Sierra Ranger District
559-855-5355

Bass Lake Ranger District
559-877-2218