



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

# Dispersed Camping

## Eldorado National Forest



If you like to camp “away from it all”, but you prefer to drive there in your car, the National Forests have just what you are looking for.

**Most of the land in the National Forest** is open to camping free of charge which is referred to as “dispersed” camping. Visitors can camp just about anywhere in the national forest, unless specifically prohibited\*. Maps and staff are available at most Forest Service offices to assist visitors in finding a suitable spot.

**Not being in a developed campground** means that there will not be certain conveniences:

- **No piped water:** boil any lake, stream or spring water for 5 minutes, or bring your own water.
- **No restrooms:** Dig a hole 6 to 8 inches deep to bury waste at least 200 feet from campsites, water sources, or trails. Digging animals will expose waste buried in shallow holes.

**The beauty of the natural vegetation** around your campsite is probably why you chose it. Keep it healthy and beautiful by not cutting anything down, not putting nails into trees, and treading carefully in meadow-like areas. Keep your vehicle on roads and trails to prevent resource damage.

When you pick your spot, make sure that it is at least 100 feet away from streams and lakes, to help protect streamside vegetation, and prevent pollution.

**There are many fine camping spots** you can reach on paved and well-graded dirt roads, but there are some rough, steep, or narrow roads that are dangerous for the family car or for bulky recreation vehicles. Make sure the road you plan to take is safe for your kind of vehicle by first talking it over with Forest Service staff.

### Lakes and Reservoirs

If you like **boat-in camping**, it is permitted on Bear River Reservoir, Union Valley Reservoir, Loon Lake and Hell Hole Reservoir.

**\*Dispersed camping is NOT allowed around the following lakes** because of heavy visitor use and the presence of summer homes:

- ◆ Echo Lake
- ◆ Caples Lake
- ◆ Gerle Creek Reservoir
- ◆ Ice House Reservoir
- ◆ Kirkwood Lake
- ◆ Silver Lake
- ◆ Stumpy Meadows Reservoir
- ◆ Woods Lake
- ◆ Wrights Lake

### Vehicles & Road Travel

In April 2008 Forest Supervisor Ramiro Villalvazo reached a decision to designate roads and trails where wheeled motor vehicles will be allowed to travel. Vehicle travel off these roads and trails will be prohibited. During the summer of 2008, the Eldorado National Forest will continue to allow use on the routes shown on the **free Motor Vehicle Restrictions map** and the associated Forest Order.

**Your vehicle can only be operated or parked on a system road or motorized trail** or within a reasonable distance so as not to block the roadway, create a safety hazard, or cause resource damage. Some of the “access” routes to remote spots along a river, stream, or lake are routes created over the years by visitors. If the route leading to a spot is not shown on the current MVR map, it is no longer open to drive on.

We anticipate that there will be a new map showing the newly designated system of roads and trails by January 1, 2009.

These restrictions do not apply to snowmobiles, watercraft, aircraft, non-motorized use (equestrian, mountain bikes), or uses authorized by permit.

Forest Service  
Pacific Southwest  
Region



April 2008

## Campfire Permits

You may want a campfire for cooking, enjoying its warmth, and roasting marshmallows.

**For campfires, stoves, lanterns or barbecues used outside a campground or recreational vehicle, you need a campfire permit.**

The permit is free, valid for a full year from January 1 to December 31, and may be obtained in person from Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection offices. Your responsibilities for building and putting out your fire safely are explained on the campfire permit.



**Be aware that as fire danger becomes greater, campfires may be prohibited.** Please check to make sure there are no restrictions.

You are welcome to gather dead and down wood to use for your campfire, but not to take home.

## Water Quality

Water quality testing is not performed on open water sources such as lakes, streams and springs. Boil or treat before using.

**“Lend a Hand, Care for the Land”**



**Practice a Leave No Trace! Ethic.**  
**When you leave your campsite,**  
**Take all garbage, large and small.**  
**PACK IT IN!**  
**PACK IT OUT!**

**Plan ahead by obtaining a National Forest map at one of the following offices:**

### Placerville Ranger District

7 ½ miles east of Placerville  
on Highway 50 - Cedar Grove exit #54  
4260 Eight Mile Road  
Camino, CA 95709  
(530) 644-2324

### Pacific Ranger District

16 miles east of Placerville  
on Highway 50 - Mill Run Road  
7887 Highway 50  
Pollock Pines, CA 95726  
(530) 647-5415

### Amador Ranger District

17 miles east of Jackson  
on Highway 88  
26820 Silver Drive  
Pioneer, CA 95666  
(209) 295-4251

### Georgetown Ranger District

3 miles east of Georgetown  
on Wentworth Springs Road  
7600 Wentworth Springs Road  
Georgetown, CA 95634  
(530) 333-4312

### Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

Located 2 miles east of the Highway 50/89 junction in South Lake Tahoe. Turn right on Al Tahoe Blvd., then right at the first signal. 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. Phone (530) 543-2600

### Lake Tahoe Forest Service Visitors Center

Located 3 miles north of the Highway 50/89 junction at South Lake Tahoe, on Highway 89. Open summer only. Call for hours.

(530) 543-2674

[www.fs.fed.us/r5/lbmu](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/lbmu)

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