



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. **Remove all trash, do not burn.**

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 designated roads and trails to prevent resource damage. *Vehicles must be **parked within one vehicle length** of the edge of the surface of a designated road or trail.*

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. Dispersed campsites must be outside of developed campgrounds.

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

Traveling In The Forest

In 2008, roads and trails on the Eldorado were designated for wheeled motor vehicle travel. Vehicle travel off these designated roads and trails is prohibited. In addition:

*All dirt roads and trails are closed to motor vehicle use between January 1 and March 31. The **Seasonal Closure** may be longer if roads or trails are wet and susceptible to damage. This closure is intended to protect water quality and prevent rutting and damage to these roads and trails. Visit the Forest’s website or call one of our offices for current status.*

Approximately 600 miles of paved and gravel roads are not affected by the closure. The Rock Creek area near Georgetown has its own seasonal closure policy and procedures.

The Motor Vehicle Use Map is a free map available in early 2009 at any of the Eldorado National Forest offices and on our website. This map shows the roads and trails on the Eldorado National Forest that are designated for motor vehicle use and which ones are restricted during the seasonal closure.

Forest Service
Pacific Southwest
Region



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 and some developed campgrounds, 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 CAL FIRE offices. Your responsibilities for building and putting out your fire safely are explained on the campfire permit. 36 CFR 261.52(k) PRC 4433.



Be aware that as fire danger becomes greater, campfires may be prohibited. Please check to find out if there are fire restrictions in the area where you intend to camp.

You are welcome to gather dead and down wood to use for your campfire, but not to take home unless you obtain a fuelwood permit.

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
Eldorado website: www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado.

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/ltbmu

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.