

Backcountry Use

Crater Lake National Park



Please know these regulations and practice minimum impact camping in Crater Lake's backcountry.

Backcountry use permits are required for all overnight stays in the park's backcountry. The only exception is for overnight use by through hikers who enter the park on the Pacific Crest Trail and exit on the PCT at the opposite boundary. (A self-registration system may be implemented this summer.)

Permits are available free of charge at entrance stations, the Steel Information Center, the Rim Village Visitor Center, and after hours from patrol rangers.

Open campfires are allowed where not specifically prohibited. Use only dead and downed wood when building campfires in the backcountry. Cutting or damaging living or standing vegetation is prohibited. (Collecting wood above 6,900 ft is prohibited.) At designated sites, please use already established fire rings rather than building new ones. (If not camping in a designated site, try to remove all signs of the fire afterward by scattering the rocks and churning the soil.) Don't leave a burning campfire unattended. Prior to leaving your campsite, make sure it is out and cold.

Camping and open fires are prohibited in the following areas to protect the experience of other visitors and to preserve specific fragile areas:

- Within one mile of any paved road, nature trail, or developed area.
- Within 1/4 mile of Boundary Springs or Sphagnum Bog.
- Within 100 feet of any water source.
- Within 100 feet of any trail or other camping party, except when using a designated campsite.
- Between Rim Drive and Crater Lake and on Phantom Ship or Wizard Island
- Atop Mt. Scott and along the trail to the its summit.
- Within any meadow.

Maximum party size is limited to 8 persons (and 12 head of stock) for all overnight trips. Larger parties must break into smaller groups, traveling and camping as distinct, separate groups.

Firearms, bicycles, and motorized vehicles are not permitted in the backcountry.

Pets are not allowed on any park trail, nor anywhere else in the backcountry.

Horses and pack animals are permitted only on designated trails. For more information, a free horse regulations handout is available at park visitor centers.

Garbage should be packed out and the campsite left clean. Use privies where available, otherwise make your toilet in a shallow slit trench and cover when finished. Make toilets away from camp and over 100 feet from any water source.

Bears may enter a campsite in search of food. All food items must be suspended from a tree branch, at least 10 feet above the ground and at least 4 feet horizontally from the trunk. Store and prepare food well away from your sleeping area. Food is defined as any packaged, bottled or canned consumables, drinks, toiletries, perfumes, soaps etc.