

On The Trail

Much of Yosemite's wilderness is at high elevation in mountainous terrain, and may involve deep stream crossings in fast and cold water. Stock users must keep their stock on established trails with the exception of a few authorized non-maintained stock routes. Off-trail or cross-country travel is prohibited except within ¼ mile of the trail for watering, rest stops, and overnight camping. Be aware that temporary and/or seasonal closures may occur at anytime. For information about authorized non-maintained stock routes, closures and other stock-related questions, call [209/372-0347](tel:2093720347) or visit a wilderness center before departing on your trip.



Travel on trail in single file



Take special care in wet conditions when use causes the greatest impact

• **Minimize Trail Impacts:** The loose herding of saddle or pack stock is prohibited except when necessary to prevent injury to stock or people. Travel in single file, pick appropriate rest stops off the trail and on durable surfaces, and spread manure piles before leaving any rest stop. Be courteous of hikers by politely asking them to step safely off the trail as you pass.

On The Trail Continued

• **Authorized non-maintained stock routes:** When using authorized non-maintained stock routes remember that the clearing of brush or cutting of trees is prohibited. Stock users must find an appropriate route without clearing trail or otherwise negatively impacting the Wilderness.

• Stock Closures Include:

The Mist Trail from Happy Isles to Nevada Falls

Lower Chilnualna Falls foot trail from the parking area in North Wawona at the horse trail junction

Mariposa Grove inner loop

The Gaylor Lakes foot trail from Tioga Pass entrance station to Gaylor Lakes

Gaylor Lakes Basin above Lower Gaylor Lake

Kerrick Meadow north of Arndt Lake is closed to grazing.

Yosemite Falls Trail from Yosemite Valley to the top of upper Yosemite Fall

• Trails that are **NOT recommended** for stock use:

The Muir Gorge Trail segment from Return Creek to Pate Valley

Snow Creek Trail from Mirror Lake

Call [209/372-0200](tel:2093720200) or visit www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/conditions.htm for current conditions.

Camping In Stock Campgrounds

- Stock must be kept in **designated stock campsites**; they are not permitted elsewhere in campground.
- **Grazing** is prohibited in developed campgrounds. The use of weed-free feed is strongly encouraged.
- **Hitch lines** or portable corrals must be used. If using a hitch line, avoid damage to trees by using **tree savers**, and prevent chewing of tree bark or branches by tying stock away from trees.
- Camps must be **cleaned daily** by raking and bagging any manure and uneaten fodder, and then depositing it in provided bear-proof dumpsters.
- Many park trailheads cannot accommodate stock **vehicles and trailers**. Make sure in advance that there will be room to turn around and/or park stock vehicles and trailers.

Wilderness Camping With Stock

- Allow plenty of time for **campsite selection**, and use an existing campsite that can accommodate stock. Choose a **hardened site** at least four miles from the trailhead. Camp and tie stock a least **100 feet** from water where stock cannot chew tree bark or leaves.
- Minimize the time stock remain in the vicinity of the **core camp/campfire ring area**. Bring stock into camp area to load and unload and then move them to a hitch line at least 100 feet from camp.
- **Do not make any permanent improvements** such as corrals, hitching rails, tables, or benches.

Wilderness Camping with Stock Continued

- Never tie stock directly to trees except for short rests, loading, or unloading. Use a **hitch line** whenever animals are to be tied for a prolonged period, and protect trees by using a **tree saver**.
- **Remove (don't just scatter) all manure** from the core camp area. Rake or scatter all manure in the hitch line area. Bring a shovel to fill in all holes and to return trampled areas to their natural state.
- **Grazing** is prohibited within four miles of a paved road and immediately surrounding the High Sierra Camps. Be aware that there are areas with no feed and temporary/seasonal closures of some meadows. The use of weed-free feed is strongly encouraged.



Use a tree saver to protect trees from damage caused by ropes rubbing the bark.



Use a hitch line at least 100 feet from camp whenever stock will be tied for a prolonged period

Heading Home

Leave a clean camp at the end of your trip. The campfire ring should be clean, trash (including unused fodder) should be packed out, horse manure should be raked and spread, and trampling impacts should be filled in and/or raked out.

Yosemite National Park Horseback Riding & Stock Use



*In riding a horse
we borrow freedom.*

Helen Thomson



Photo courtesy
Johanna Wheeler

Welcome!

Horses and mules have been part of the history and tradition of Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada for over a century. Yosemite National Park continues to offer visitors many opportunities to experience wilderness from the saddle, and stock is used to support the park in its trail crew, wilderness patrol, and search & rescue operations.

Most of Yosemite National Park is Congressionally designated Wilderness. All visitors, including stock users, have an obligation to limit their impact by practicing low-impact camping and riding techniques so that future generations may enjoy the park's wild beauty. This brochure will help acquaint you with proper stock use in the park. For additional questions about stock use, call 209/372-0347 or visit online at www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/stock.htm. For wilderness permits, call 209/372-0740.



Stock Use Regulations And Planning Your Trip

- **Planning** is the most important step in preparing for an enjoyable trip. There are opportunities for day rides starting from trailheads in developed campgrounds as well as longer wilderness trips. Plan your route with the help of the park website, topographic maps, guidebooks, and by visiting a wilderness center in the park. Yosemite's terrain can challenge even the most experienced horses and riders. Choose a reasonable route for your group's abilities and experience. Ensure equipment is in good working condition and practice using it before you begin your trip.
- **Maximum group size** is 15 people and 25 head of stock.
- **Allowable stock** includes only horses, mules, burros, or llamas. Llamas are not allowed on the High Sierra Loop, the Vernal and Nevada Falls corridor, or the river trail from Nevada Fall to Merced Lake. Exceptions may be made for Pacific Crest Trail and John Muir Trail users with written permission of the park Superintendent.
- **A permit is required to possess a firearm.** One unloaded firearm may be carried by the lead packer for the purpose of dispatching injured stock. Firearm must be kept out of sight and ammunition kept separate from the weapon.
- **Campfires** are prohibited above 9,600 feet to protect fragile high-elevation ecosystems. Below 9,600 feet, fires are permitted only in established fire rings.

Stock Use Regulations Continued

- **Proper food Storage** is required throughout Yosemite to protect bears and people. All food, scented items, garbage, grain, and sweet feed must be properly stored in bear-proof lockers or approved bear-resistant containers. Bear-proof lockers are provided in campgrounds and at trailheads. Bear canisters are available at Wilderness Centers in the park with a \$5 rental fee and \$70 deposit. Visit www.sierrawildbear.gov/foodstorage/approvedcontainers.htm for approved bear-resistant containers and panniers. Bear-resistant panniers may be available for rent—call for details.

Reservations For Staying Overnight

- **On the trail:** If you plan to camp in the wilderness, a permit is required. Permits are available up to 24 weeks (168 days) in advance for trips occurring from May through October. Visit www.nps.gov/yose/wilderness/permits.htm or call 209/372-0740 for more information and to make a reservation. Reserved permits are held until 10 am on the day of your trip. Overnight permits by reservation are \$5 per permit + \$5 for each person in the group. Forty percent of available permits are “first-come, first-served.” These walk-up permits become available one day before you plan to leave for your trip at the following locations: Yosemite Valley Wilderness Center, Tuolumne Meadows Wilderness Center, Big Oak Flat Information Station, Wawona Visitor Center at Hill's Studio, and Hetch Hetchy Entrance Station.

Reservations For Staying Overnight Continued

- **In a campground:** If you plan to stay in one of the park's developed campgrounds, it must have designated stock sites, and reservations are required. Campgrounds with stock sites are located in Wawona (two sites), Bridalveil Creek (three sites) and Tuolumne Meadows (four sites). Each site can accommodate up to six people and six head of stock. There is a limit of two vehicles and two stock trailers per parking area. Stock trailers are not permitted on the Hetch Hetchy Road, and there are no stock camps in Yosemite Valley. Visit www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/camping.htm for more information or call 877/444-6777 for campground reservations.

- **Overnight boarding:** Overnight boarding facilities may be available on a limited basis at DNC Parks & Resorts stables located within the park. Horse and stock owners are responsible for making advance arrangements. Call DNC at 209/372-4386 or visit www.yosemitepark.com for more information.



Bring a rake and shovel to naturalize areas and scatter manure.

*No hour of life is wasted
that is spent in the saddle.*

Winston Churchill



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Photo courtesy Billie Patrick