

Horse Camping (outside of Wilderness areas)

ROG 16-08 2/2020

Enjoy Nature's beauty on horseback

The Stanislaus National Forest has about 400 miles of riding trails and several areas suitable for base camps. Exploring the country on horseback offers riders a special chance to get close to the environment with his/her mount. Regulations regarding group size and stock handling in the wilderness areas are available at Forest Service offices and are posted at trailheads. For non-wilderness groups of more than 75 people, please apply for a special-use permit at the ranger district office in the area you plan to visit.

Where to Go

For a riding adventure at lower elevations, try areas on the Mi-Wok and Groveland ranger districts. On Mi-Wok District visit Thompson Meadow, Bourland Meadow, Reynolds Creek, Camp Clavey or Deer Creek - watch for OHV traffic around Deer Creek.

On Groveland District you can ride and camp at Anderson Valley and Kibbie Ridge. The area south of the Cherry Lake Dam is also available for horse camping.

Riding and camping opportunities are also available on the Summit Ranger District. The Clark Fork Horse Camp is popular, with day rides possible from the horse camp into the high elevations of Carson-Iceberg Wilderness areas. Undeveloped camping areas suitable for horse camping are available and require no camping fee. These areas include Eagle Meadow, Hammill Canyon, Coyote Meadow and Kerrick Corral horse camps. One horse camping facility, Pine Valley, is not listed on the map but is the first horse camp on Crabtree Road. Pine Valley, Kerrick Corral, Clark Fork and Eagle Meadow all have restrooms and fire rings. Coyote Meadow and Hammill Canyon have no improvements at all.

The Calaveras Ranger District has many high-elevation areas for riding and camping. Suggested routes include the loop trail from Wheeler Lake to Sandy Meadow; Pine Marten Campground to Duck and Rock lakes; Stanislaus Meadow to Bull Run, Heiser and Mosquito lakes; Highland Lakes to Arnot Creek, Wood Gulch, Jenkin Canyon and Hiram Meadow loop trail; and the trail from Frog Lake in the Mokelumne Wilderness to Mount Reba.

A wilderness permit is required for overnight stays in the Emigrant, Carson-Iceberg and Mokelumne wilderness areas. These permits are issued free of charge at any Forest Service office.

Special livestock-use rules will be attached to your wilderness permit. Be familiar with wilderness regulations—whether for day or night use. Day use of these areas does not require a permit.



On the Trail

Start your horse(s) at a walk to warm them up. Travel one horse-length apart. Warn riders behind you as you pass possible hazards, like cans, broken glass or narrow trail. If you encounter a hiker on a narrow, steep trail, ask him/her to move to the lower side of the trail until all riders have passed. Be careful when crossing swampy areas, potential slide areas, deep snowdrifts, steep or slippery trails, streams and rivers. Snow-melt in spring and summer months makes many crossings potentially dangerous for horses. Don't overestimate your mount's abilities. When in doubt, avoid the crossing.

Please use defined trails where possible; cutting switchbacks damages valuable topsoil. Be wary of off highway vehicles and mountain bikes that may be sharing some of the trails outside wilderness areas.

At Camp

Camping with livestock is not allowed in developed campgrounds, unless otherwise posted. Animals should be kept at least 100 feet from lakes, streams and campsites. Picking campsites that don't have to be cleared of vegetation and can withstand the impact of horses and people reduces damage to resources. Durable sites, secluded from trails and other campers, are best.



These areas usually get less use and the woods offer protection from sun and wind.

Do not tie livestock to trees. Tying stock to horse trailers or on a hitch line strung between trees helps keep trees from being damaged. Introducing animals to hitch lines while still at home can do much to avert problems at camp. Hemp or cotton rope is best for hitch or lead ropes. Plastic rope can cause hide burns and damage tree bark.

Try to maintain a neat camp. Use available fire rings or consider bringing a portable camp stove to eliminate the need for a cooking fire. Practice Leave No Trace ethics and Pack it in, Pack it out - even the smallest amount of trash can harm wildlife. Scatter horse manure and smooth over areas where animals were tied.

Plan Your Trip

Have a good idea of where you are going before you get there. Know what landmarks to look for and how far you will ride in one stretch. Schedule rest stops to avoid fatiguing yourself or your animal.

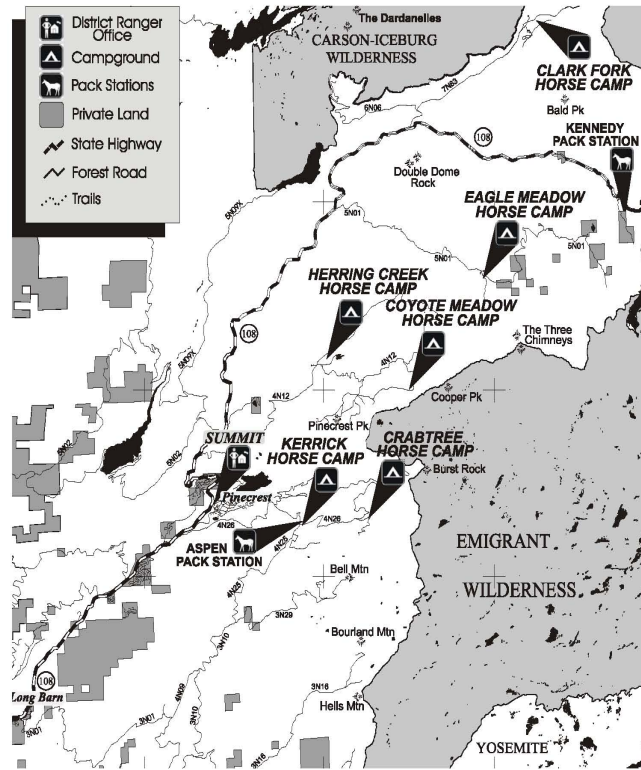
For planning your trip, forest maps may be purchased at any of the Forest Service offices or from the forest website. Topographic maps that show elevation and terrain are also available and will be very helpful if you visit unfamiliar areas.

Caring for Your Animal

Think about your horse's fitness level while planning your journey. Cinch sores, stone bruises, fatigue and dehydration can easily spoil your trip. Valley animals are accustomed to an occasional lope around a relatively flat area. They should not be exposed to a strenuous workout involving steep, rocky slopes without proper conditioning.

Bring plenty of food for your animals. Depending on grassland is risky and can result in overgrazed areas that damage the environment. Forage limitations and grazing restrictions may also be in place. Meadows should always be left in the best possible condition when you depart. The use of supplemental feed can reduce grazing time and the amount of live feed consumed.

Please avoid packing in uncertified hay or unprocessed grain. Processed and pellet-sized feed is a good source of nutrition. It is more



concentrated than hay and will keep the weight and bulk of feed you have to convey to a minimum. Feeding certified hay and feed to animals several days prior to your trip can help prevent the unwitting transport of weeds in horse manure. The seeds of many weeds and non-native species are found in unprocessed feed. Once passed, these seeds can germinate and grow, competing with native plants. As an alternative to placing feed on the ground, consider putting it in a simple nosebag or on a tarp.

Ensure your mount is properly shod. You may want to consider special horseshoes if your trip takes you over predominantly rocky areas. Insect repellent and/or fringed eye guards will increase your mount's comfort and tend to reduce their tendency to paw. You may also want to pack an equine first-aid kit.



**For additional information and assistance,
contact these locations:**

Stanislaus National Forest

19777 Greenley Road
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 532-3671

Calaveras Ranger District

5519 Hwy 4
PO Box 500
Hathaway Pines, CA 95323
(209) 795-1381

Summit Ranger District

#1 Pinecrest Lake Road
Pinecrest, CA 95364
(209) 965-3434

Groveland Ranger District

24545 Hwy 120
Groveland, CA 95321
(209) 962-7825

**Pack stations authorized to rent
animals and offer pack trips in the forest,
operated under USFS Special Use Permit:**

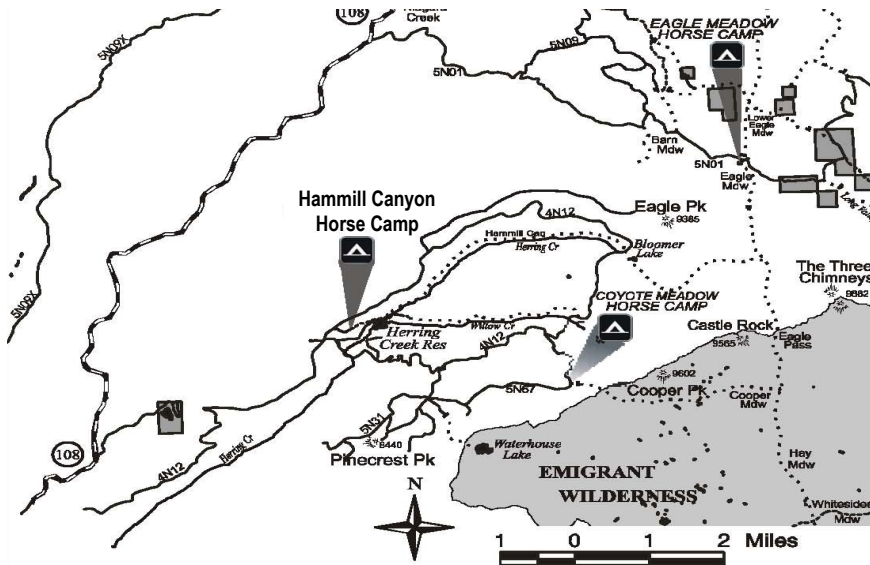
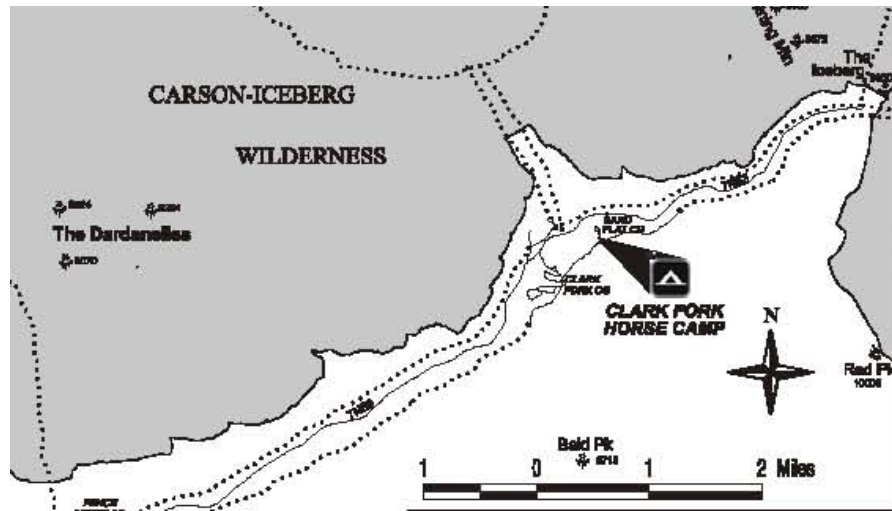
Aspen Meadow Pack Station
PO Box 1435
Pinecrest, CA 95364
(209) 965-3402

Kennedy Meadow Pack Station
PO Box 1490
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 965-3900



Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
"Caring for the Land and Serving People"

Stanislaus National Forest
www.fs.usda.gov/stanislaus
Email: stf-public_affairs@usda.gov



Try not to drop even the smallest bit of trash.

Remember the horseman's creed:

"When I ride out of the mountains, I'll leave only footprints, take only memories."

