



United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service



**PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION**

*Restoring, Enhancing and Sustaining Forests in California, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands*

**Sierra National Forest**

# Horses, Mules and Good Camping Rules Bass Lake Ranger District

**TELLING IT STRAIGHT**

At one time, wilderness travel was unrestricted with few or no regulations. Increased use and popularity of the mountain range has caused resource problems resulting in resource damage. Each group of backcountry users needs to be responsible for their actions. "Leave No Trace" is used to relate backcountry use to resources protection. By taking care to protect the basic resources and abiding by local rules and regulations, stock users can help ensure continued use of their horses and mules in the wilderness.

Camping practices of yesteryear have been replaced by a land camping ethic minimizing impact. As a temporary visitor to the forest or wilderness, leave no imprints on the land. The forces of nature need to be allowed to dominate the landscape

**GETTING IT TOGETHER**

If your trip includes wilderness areas, a Visitor's Permit is required for all overnight use. The maximum group size is 15 people and 25 head of stock. Contact the ranger station early to inquire about reservations and permits or visit: [www.fs.usda.gov/sierra](http://www.fs.usda.gov/sierra)

Before leaving, stock should be conditioned for the trail and familiarized with different methods of restraint (e.g. hobbles, hitch lines, bells). Grazing meadows in the spring when grass is starting to grow and soil is still wet, results in lasting damage to meadows. If you take stock into an area closed to

grazing you must pack in all of the feed for your animals. The schedule for grazing restrictions (if any) is available in May. **Weed Free Feed:** In wilderness areas supplemental weed-free feed or processed feed, such as alfalfa pellets or crimped oats, are recommended

**ON THE TRAIL**

When someone cuts across a switchback, it begins a path for soil erosion and encourages others to follow. Keep stock on the trail tread.

Purifying water before drinking to avoid getting bacterial dysentery is highly recommended. Halozone or iodine tables are effective and easy to use. Water can be disinfected by boiling for 10 minutes or by using an appropriately rated lightweight filter system.

Chemical disinfectants like iodine, chlorine tablets or drops are not considered reliable as heat in killing Giardia, although they work well against most disease causing waterborne bacteria and viruses. The amount of iodine or chlorine necessary to kill Giardia depends on water temperature, pH, clarity, and contact time between the chemical and the parasite.

In an emergency, use an iodine based product, since iodine is often more effective than chlorine. If possible, filter or strain water first, and allow the iodine to work at least 30 minutes. If the water is cold or cloudy, allow at least an hour or use more iodine. For short trips, bring a supply of water.



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To dispose of human waste, select a screened spot at least 150 feet from any trail, camp, lake or stream. Dig a hole eight to ten inches deep. After, use, fill the hole with loose soil and tamp the soil in place. Please do not establish latrine sites as they place an intense burden on the biological decomposers.

### **CAMPSITE SELECTION**

Selecting a good wilderness horse camp takes care and consideration. Campsites should be located 100 feet or more from lakes, streams, trails and meadows. This helps prevent water contamination, loss of bank vegetation and meadow grasses. Select a site where a hitch line (e.g. lash or halter rope tied between two trees) can be located on firm, dry ground. The use of hobbles is another alternative for restraining animals. These methods will avoid problems of soil disturbance and root damage. Camping away from meadows keeps these grassy areas available for wildlife to feed and drink. Choose a campsite that retains solitude for yourself and others, allowing freedom from the intrusion of urban-type sights, sounds and odors.

The best campsites are away from water on higher ground, making sites drier, warmer and less popular with mosquitoes. Rearranging rocks and twigs is okay to accommodate your sleeping bag or tent, but remove all traces of your presence before leaving your campsite. Keep a clean camp to avoid attracting wildlife.

### **HANG FOOD**

Hanging food over a high tree branch can be a way to protect food and yourself. Throw a long rope over a tall tree branch with food in heavy plastic bags, tightly sealed with bags secured to the rope. Hoist the bag to within five feet of the limb and secure rope to the tree trunk. Another way is the counterbalance method which balances the items without a rope to the tree.

### **NEVER APPROACH A BEAR**

If you should encounter a bear, make noise – yell, clap hands, bang pots, use a whistle or air horn. Stand together with other people and NEVER surround a bear. If you see bear cubs, a mother bear may act aggressively to protect them, use extreme caution .

Do your part to save wild bears from becoming accustomed to connecting humans with food. Save the life of a bear.

### **CAMPFIRES AND LITTER**

Firewood is scarce in high elevations. Gas stoves are more convenient and are recommended. Fire rings, blackened rocks and trash are a blemish on the natural environment. If a campfire is needed, build a minimum size fire ring and return rocks to their natural place, blackened side down. Be sure the fire is completely out by pouring water over the coals and ashes, stirring with a stick until the coals are cool to the touch.

### **PACKING UP AND HEADING HOME**

Take a few minutes to naturalize your camp. Scatter manure, refill holes dug by stock, and remove any trace left by others such as rails, bailing wire, rope or deer racks. Litter and food scraps are unsightly and create an artificial food source that can alter the behavior and distribution of many wildlife species. Please "Leave No Trace" by packing home in plastic bags cans, bottles, metal foil, feminine hygiene products, disposable diapers and unused food. Take them home as burying garbage no longer applies. Take pride in how well you "Leave No Trace" of your visit.

For more information please contact:

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