

adventure, inspired by



EXPLORING PUBLIC LANDS

A GUIDE TO DISPERSED CAMPING,
BOONDOCKING, DRY CAMPING,
AND MORE



DISPERSED CAMPING. BOONDOCKING. DRY CAMPING.

NO MATTER WHAT YOU CALL IT,
THE EXPERIENCE OF CAMPING OUT
ON A STRETCH OF WILD, PRIMITIVE
FEDERAL PUBLIC LAND IS NOTHING
SHORT OF SPECTACULAR.

This information is as current as possible of September 2019. Always check before you go. We use the words dispersed camping, boondocking and dry camping throughout this guide interchangeably.

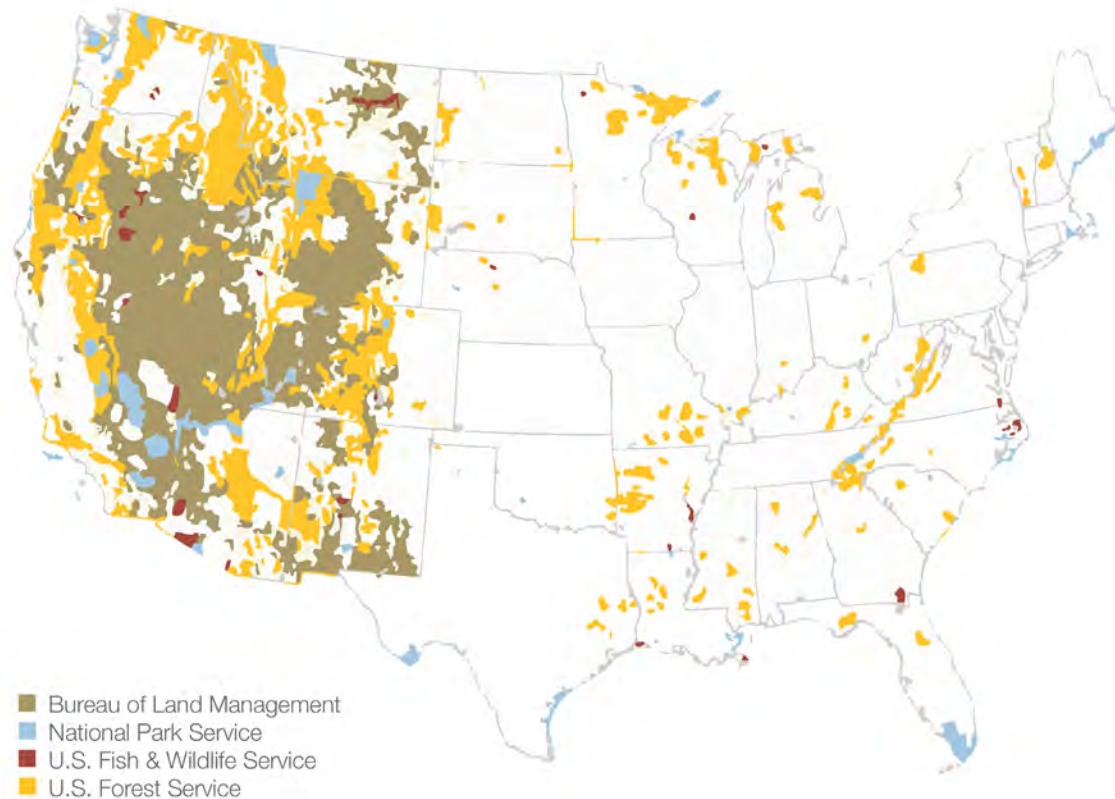


UNITED STATES PUBLIC LANDS

There's an abundance of such places across the country – a total of about 610 million acres of America's 2.27 billion acres of land.

The reason it's called dry camping, boondocking or dispersed camping is that these places generally don't have hookups. Many don't have amenities of any sort – no water, no trash or sewage stations, and no restrooms or showers.

But don't let the lack of conveniences deter you. When you're taking the creature comforts of home with you in your camper, you won't even notice. With just a little planning, you can steep in nature with the best of them.



Source: Outdoor Alliance - www.outdooralliance.org

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NATIONAL FOREST SERVICE



DID YOU KNOW

National Forest Service is part of the
U.S. Department of Agriculture

28,000 permanent employees

4,500 seasonal employees



The United States Forest Service's forests and grasslands are vast – the US and Puerto Rico are currently home to a 193-million-acre National Forest System. And it's out there waiting for you to set up camp and enjoy nature, uninterrupted.

The splendor, serenity, seclusion and immersion in nature offered through dispersed camping is simply unparalleled. There is nothing like waking up and being surrounded only by natural vistas. What's more, while you can't put a price tag on these experiences, many of the best dry camping locations are available for free.

The United States Forest Service (USFS) manages and protects our 154 national forests and 20 grasslands in 43 states and Puerto Rico. This agency's mission is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present generations and those to come.

Airstream is a proud partner of The National Forest Foundation (NFF), a non-profit organization charged by Congress to engage Americans in the land of the United States Forest Service (USFS).



CAMPSITES AND RESERVATIONS

Visitors are encouraged to visit the forests and take advantage of the many opportunities for dispersed camping.

Use USFS’s online tool to find the right forest and campground. Most forest campgrounds are operated on a first-come, first-served system.

National Parks are often surrounded by National Forests, making the forests an ideal location if you’re planning a trip to a park during peak season.

Say you want to go to Yosemite, but all of the campgrounds are full. Log on to the USFS website and search around the area. You’ll find several forests located within proximity of Yosemite, many with established, primitive campsites or awesome places to accommodate your camper. NFF’s online tool will help you locate camping opportunities in any of the forests.

Boondocking and Yosemite, anyone? Now we’re talking.

9,000+

MILES OF SCENIC BYWAYS

5,100

CAMPGROUNDS



RECREATION

Options for adventure in the forests come in all shapes and sizes. You can use your Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) in these spaces, like all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), snowmobiles and motorcycles. OHVs can operate on any road or trail that is designated with an OHV marker.

While not every type of activity is allowed in every forest, most outdoor recreational activities are allowed in one forest or another. If you're looking to do some rock climbing, target shooting or cross-country skiing, you can find opportunities in a National Forest.



Maximum Stays - 14 days, 21 days per Ranger District per calendar year and reservations are first-come, first-served through online system at [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov)

28

NATURAL POOLS

150K

HIKING TRAILS

4,000+

MILES OF RIVERS
TO FLOAT



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



DID YOU KNOW

Bureau of Land Management is part of
the U.S. Department of Interior

11,600 full-time employees

30,000 volunteers

There are thousands of miles of
multiple-use trails



While the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was officially established in 1946, its history goes back to the American land expansion of the late 1700s and early 1800s. In 1812, the General Land Office (BLM's very early predecessor) was created to encourage homesteading and westward migration. In fact, early BLM land was considered unwanted, as homesteaders had passed it by.

Bureau of Land Management lands are found in every one of our 50 states and encompass forests, mountains, rangelands, arctic tundra, and deserts. The BLM's mission is "to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."

CAMPSITES AND RESERVATIONS

Ready to find a place to set up camp? Check out the BLM's interactive online map to get started.

When it comes to dispersed camping, the sky's the limit - most of the public lands that aren't developed campgrounds are open to dispersed camping. Some areas are clearly posted "closed to camping" to protect wildlife.

Nearly all BLM campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Some developed campsites do take reservations via Recreation.gov.

4,500

MILES OF NATIONAL
SCENIC, HISTORIC, &
RECREATION TRAILS

205K

MILES OF
FISHABLE STREAMS



Maximum Stays – 14 nights within 28 day period. On the 29th day you must move at least 25 miles from the original site. First-come, first-served with limited-to-no-amenities.

RECREATION

Anyone who hasn't visited BLM land should immediately plan a trip to one of these amazing areas. There are myriad ways that you can spend time enjoying this land.

Hikers, get your daypacks ready. The agency manages 4,500 miles of National Scenic, National Historic, and National Recreation Trails, as well as thousands of miles of multiple-use trails. If you're an OHVer, you'll be glad to learn that these trails are often used for motorcycling, ATV'ing, horseback riding, and mountain biking.

Want a scenic drive? There are 69 National Back Country Byways and 300 Watchable Wildlife sites that are part of BLM land. And, over 99% of BLM lands are open to hunting, recreational shooting opportunities, and fishing.



99% of BLM lands are open to hunting, recreational shooting opportunities, and fishing

2.2

MILLION ACRES OF
LAKES AND RESERVOIRS

6,600

MILES OF RIVERS TO FLOAT

500+

BOATING ACCESS POINTS



USACE

(UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS)



DID YOU KNOW

USACE is a federal agency under the Department of Defense and a major Army command

over 400 lake and river projects currently in place in 43 states

USACE-managed waters provide 18% of all US freshwater fishing



The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is one of the nation's leading federal providers of outdoor recreation. This federal agency – under the Department of Defense and a major Army command – is responsible for managing 12 million acres of our nation's public lands and waters.

While the USACE is typically associated with canals, dams and flood protection, the agency is also involved in a comprehensive program to provide outdoor recreation opportunities to the public.

A USACE campground is among the best of the best. Each was designed, after all, by the same engineers who are responsible for some of our nation's major public works projects. It shows.

With 90 percent of their recreation areas located within 50 miles of major metropolitan areas, there's likely a USACE site near you.



CAMPSITES AND RESERVATIONS

While some campsites offer full hookups, most are primitive. Don't let the lack of amenities keep you away from these treasures. You can dry camp with all of the comforts of your camper, plus a calm lake, babbling creek or winding river right outside your door.

All USACE campgrounds are incredibly well-maintained and generally consist of large sites, paved roads, and concrete parking pads. USACE campsites are usually located on a large body of water, which makes for great recreation and relaxing scenery.

How's that for tranquility?

To locate a USACE campground, start with a compilation website such as Campendium. Or, go to the interactive map on the Corps Lakes Gateway website. Here you can click on the state you're interested in camping, then view available campgrounds.

Another source is Jane Kenny's RV'ers Guide To Corps of Engineers Campgrounds, which lists over 600 camping areas across the nation.

93,101

CAMPSITES

\$40

ANNUAL DAY-USE
ACCESS PASS

\$14-20

AVG PER NIGHT



RECREATION

Another great resource is Recreation.gov. Use this tool to make reservations for a USACE campground and check availability of sites that don't take reservations. Recreation.gov also has a comprehensive listing of amenities at each campground.

Visitors to USACE campgrounds will find plenty to do. Campers can enjoy traditional activities like hiking, boating, fishing, and hunting. There are also opportunities for more adventurous endeavors, like snorkeling, windsurfing, whitewater rafting, mountain biking and geocaching.



37,000 military and civilian personnel are employed by USACE, making it one of the world's largest public engineering, design and construction management agencies

55,390

MILES OF SHORELINE

7,892

MILES OF TRAILS

3,748

BOAT RAMPS



NATIONAL PARKS

“
There is nothing
so American
as our National
Parks.

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

”



Our National Parks are gateways to new worlds - from the vastness of the Grand Canyon to the majestic vistas of the Rocky Mountains to the varied landscape of historic Yellowstone.

The 58 National Parks are the crown jewels of our country. The National Parks are so stunning and so integral to our national landscape that they are protected by law. These places of natural wonder encompass a total of 84 million acres across the country.

While the National Parks System has an online reservation system, some campsites are first-come, first-served. Be sure you know what the practice is once you've found your perfect site. If you can reserve, great! If not, you should probably arrive early or mid-week to secure a space, especially if it's a popular destination.

If this doesn't work, don't fret. Consider camping in the federal public lands around the park. “Most National Parks are surrounded by National Forests,” says Mary Mitsos, Executive Director of the National Forest Foundation. “Many of the parks were National Forests first, and then Congress changed their designation to National Parks. I was just in Yellowstone, which is surrounded by five National Forests.”



CAMPSITES AND RESERVATIONS

Reservations for national parks are typically released six months in advance for single sites, and twelve months in advance for group sites. This could vary by park, so check online to be sure.

Many National Parks post information on their websites about nearby dispersed camping spots. Or, start with the National Parks Service website and search for dispersed camping around your park of choice, or use Google Maps to find the public lands surrounding the area.

And, there's nothing like a phone call to a park employee who knows the area. Look up the number to the National Park ranger station and give them a ring. It's old-school, but it works.

58

NATIONAL PARKS

84

MILLION ACRES

318

MILLION VISITS
PER YEAR



RECREATION

Get ready for adventure! Depending on the park, however, some activities may not be available or may require a permit. This rule often applies to fishing, multi-day backpacking trips and the use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs).

When planning your trip, don't overwhelm yourself with a fully scheduled itinerary. Instead, pick the few things that you especially want to see and give yourself plenty of time to enjoy them.

You may have your trip planned, but don't forget to stop at the visitor center to speak with park rangers. They can offer insider info, like hidden trails you should explore or the best place to see the sunset. Park Rangers are knowledgeable about which roads or areas of the park may be closed at the time.

27K


FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

14

BILLION VISITORS
FROM 1904-2018

317K

VOLUNTEERS
IN 2018



THE SPLENDOR, SERENITY, SECLUSION AND
IMMERSION IN NATURE OFFERED THROUGH
DISPERSED CAMPING IS SIMPLY UNPARALLELED.
THERE IS NOTHING LIKE WAKING AND BEING
SURROUNDED ONLY BY NATURAL VISTAS.

WHAT'S MORE, WHILE YOU CAN'T PUT A PRICE TAG
ON THESE EXPERIENCES, MANY OF THE BEST DRY
CAMPING LOCATIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR FREE.

PLANNING RESOURCES

GETTING OFF THE BEATEN PATH IS EASIER THAN EVER BEFORE.
CHECK OUT THESE APPS AND WEBSITES TO HELP PLAN YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE.



Roadtrippers: Discover millions of places, like local diners and quirky roadside attractions, or scenic points, national parks, and hotels. Get inspiration from pre-made trip guides of some of the most interesting and once-in-a-lifetime routes you need to see at least once.



Coverage?: Useful when trying to figure out in advance if you'll have cellphone coverage. It directly overlays and compares cellular coverage maps from different carriers.



Google Earth: Want to know where people have camped before on public lands? Use Google Earth with satellite view to look for other campers. Once you hone in on a possible location, be sure to check if camping is permitted there. US Public Lands will let you know if where you're you are (or where you're planning to be) sits on the nearly 650 million acres of US Federal



Campendium: Has tens of thousands of places to camp, from swanky RV parks to free remote destinations.

PLANNING RESOURCES

GETTING OFF THE BEATEN PATH IS EASIER THAN EVER BEFORE.
CHECK OUT THESE APPS AND WEBSITES TO HELP PLAN YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE.

RECREATION.gov

[Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov)



fs.fed.us/visit/destinations



blm.gov



usace.army.mil



nps.gov/index.htm

PLANNING RESOURCES

USE THIS HANDY GUIDE FOR QUICK INFORMATION ABOUT CAMPING AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR EACH TYPE OF PUBLIC LAND

	NATIONAL FORESTS	BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT	ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS	NATIONAL PARKS
Maximum Stay for Dispersed Camping	14 days, per 21 days	14 days within a 28 consecutive day period	14 days within consecutive 30 day period	14 days, per 30 days
Average Cost per Night	\$8-35	\$10-25	\$14-20	\$20-\$35
Reservations (link)	https://www.nationalforests.org/our-forests/find-a-forest	https://www.recreation.gov	https://www.recreation.gov	https://www.recreation.gov
First-Come, First-Serve Available	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
# of Campsites	over 5,100	can be found in all 50 states	91,000	Over 130 park unit locations
Pets Allowed	Pets in developed areas only	Dogs off-leash in undeveloped areas, on-leash in campgrounds and developed areas	Dogs must be leashed in developed areas	Dogs in developed areas only
Type of Recreation Permitted**				
Equestrian	X	X	X	X
Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)	X	X	X	X
Hunting	X	X	X	X
Fishing	X	X	X	X
Hiking	X	X	X	X
Boating/Kayaking	X	X	X	X
Target Practice	X	X	No, but maybe soon	X
Firewood	Dead and down material may be used for fires	Only in posted, designated campgrounds and recreational areas	Only in posted, designated campgrounds and recreational areas	Only in posted, designated campgrounds and recreational areas
Leave No Trace	X	X	X	X

MAKE YOUR EXPERIENCE MEMORABLE WITH THESE PRO TIPS

Reservations can be made through Recreation.gov. When it's first-come, first-served, remember that the early bird catches the best site. Try to arrive mid-week for popular campsites.

If the National Parks are booked, consider dispersed camping, including National Forests and land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

Most of our national parks have stay limits, typically a maximum of 14 days in a 30-day period. Check the park you plan to visit to see if they have shorter spans or offer longer stays.

If you aren't traveling with kids, consider making your visit during the park's shoulder seasons – meaning right when kids go back to school or right before they get out. That's when our public lands tend to be quieter, but are still just as beautiful. September, in particular, is one of the best months to plan a visit.

“
There is nothing
so American
as our National
Parks.

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

”

MAKE YOUR EXPERIENCE MEMORABLE WITH THESE PRO TIPS

Bring the right gear, but don't overpack. Have water bottles, a backpack that's comfortable for hiking, a small pair of binoculars, a headlamp and batteries. If the weather may be variable at the park, be sure you bring layers; they are the best way to be prepared for any adventure.

Pick up the phone and call the public land agency; they're happy to help. They can often tell you more about the drive, places to camp, cell service (if there's any at all) and maximum stay limitations.

When your holding tanks get full, don't fret. There are mobile pump out trucks that can come to you! These are often the same companies that are servicing the pit toilets in nearby parks and campgrounds. A quick Google search will get you hooked up and pumped out.

Carry a water jug or bladder to refill water. It's a lot easier to ferry water back than having to relocate a recreational vehicle.

As with any trip into the outdoors, leave your campsite more beautiful than you found it.

“
There are no words
that can tell the
hidden spirit of the
wilderness that can
reveal its mystery, its
melancholy and its
charm.

— Theodore Roosevelt

”

STAY SAFE WHILE PUBLIC LAND CAMPING

Camp where there is cell phone service when possible. Not only for your personal safety, but in general, it is always a good idea to be able to make an emergency phone call if needed.

Know your location. Be sure you are able to provide a good description of where you are camped including the name of the road, milepost and your position relative to both. Consider capturing the coordinates of your campsite via GPS when you arrive at camp and keep them handy to give to first responders if needed. Share this information with your group when you arrive.

Keep a first-aid kit at your fingertips.

When camping alone, put two chairs, an extra pair of large men's shoes and a large dog dish outside your door or tent as a deterrent.

Park out of view, or in view if you prefer, of a roadway depending on the circumstances and surroundings.

File a trip plan with family and friends with the details of your trip before you head out.

If your vehicle is equipped with a remote key fob, keep it nearby when camping. The honking horn and flashing lights can be seen and heard for miles.

Consider carrying a satellite based communication device like (Iridium Go, Spot Messenger). Regardless of cell phone coverage, it allows you to check in with family, let them know where you are camped and call for help from almost anywhere.

Check the local district to see if campfires are allowed and if permits are required.

If you don't have cell service, find out if there is a place nearby where you can go quickly to get reception.

Know the location of the closest ranger station.

JOIN US IN SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION



DID YOU KNOW

In addition to 5,100 campsites, our 154 National Forests and 20 National Grasslands contain some of the country's most beautiful wildlife and pristine public lands. For most of the year, they are open to campers, often for free or low cost.



The National Forest Foundation (NFF) is a non-profit organization charged by Congress to engage Americans in the land of the United States Forest Service (USFS).

“We achieve this mission through promoting the health and public enjoyment of our National Forests,” says Mary Mitsos, Executive Director of the (NFF). “Some of the ways we stay connected with the public are through social media, our blog, a twice-yearly magazine, and our electronic newsletter ‘Tree-Mail’.”

While the foundation receives some funding from Congress, the NFF relies heavily on additional funds from the private sector. Airstream is a proud partner of the NFF (www.nationalforests.org). There are also local opportunities for people to volunteer in a National Forest, or to help by planting trees in areas affected by fires, floods and hurricanes. Learn more about how you can get involved and help [here](#).

These lands are natural riches, and they are wonderful places to dry camp with your

“

To open a whole world of new experiences...a
new dimension in enjoyment where travel
adventure and good fellowship are your
constant companions.

— Wally Byam, Airstream Founder

”