



Special Park Conditions

Activity: Camping – Backcountry

A. Authorized Services

1. The commercial activity authorized by this permit is guided backpacking. Day hiking that does not involve overnight stays in the backcountry is prohibited under this permit.
2. The use of ropes, hardware, protection, snow anchors, crampons, and ice axes are not authorized. Activities that would require the use of such equipment are not authorized under this permit.
3. Trips are encouraged to be provided during mid-week to avoid peak use on weekends and holidays.

B. Tour Leader and Guide Certifications

1. Trip guides must:
 - a. Be familiar with the park, know and obey park regulations and area closures, and assure compliance with regulations and area closures from participants.
 - b. Understand the hazards involved and prepare participants for conditions and situations which may be encountered.
 - c. Be currently certified in standard first aid and CPR.
 - d. All guides must carry a first aid kit suitable for backcountry emergencies and appropriately sized for the group they are guiding.
 - e. All guides are required to have and carry a cell phone at minimum. Cell phone coverage is limited in the park. A Guide may need additional reliable emergency communication device which could include a GPS locator beacon, satellite messenger, or satellite phone.
 - f. Assure that all members of the group are properly clothed and equipped for the trip.
2. A written list of all guides, with description of basic qualifications, must be provided to the park prior to beginning operations. Copies of all certifications must be on file at the base of operations and may be requested by the Superintendent at any time.
3. Must employ a staff with the expertise, training, and experience to operate all services authorized under the CUA permit.
4. Guides shall educate the group on LNT principles and practices.
5. All guides are required to take the Online Awareness course on Leave No Trace. It is free. [Leave No Trace: Take Action to Protect the Outdoors - Overview \(lnt.org\)](#)

C. Conduct of Trip

1. Guided backpacking trips must be conducted in a manner respectful of the park's resources while emphasizing visitor safety.
2. All trips must have a ratio of qualified guides to participants sufficient to permit a safe and meaningful experience. This ratio is 1 guide for up to 6 participants. Total group size will depend on allowable size of groups and tents in campsites and must be no larger than 12.
 - a. **Individual Sites:** Maximum group size is 7.
 - b. **Group Sites:** Maximum group size is 12.
3. All trip participants must honor the rights of others and always conduct themselves in a professional manner.
4. A Rocky Mountain National Park Ranger will be permitted to accompany a trip at least once per season to evaluate the program.
5. All trips are required to utilize and promote Leave No Trace hiking and camping practices to minimize impacts on the resource.
6. The CUA holder or guide shall provide all participants with an orientation prior to the trip which emphasizes safe practices while recreating in the park. At a minimum, the orientation should include nature and demands of the trips, safety and emergency procedures, weather conditions, park regulations, wildlife interactions, and Leave No Trace practices.

7. Food service provided shall be in accordance with current U.S. Public Health Service Food Code.

D. Wilderness Site Reservations

1. A "trip" is defined as a party of up to 12 persons staying in the backcountry/wilderness for up to 7 consecutive nights.
2. All trips will be required to abide by the requirements and conditions of the park's wilderness permit.
3. Reservations for wilderness permits will be reserved through **www.recreation.gov**. All reservations for commercial trips will be reserved under a commercial account with a Rocky Mountain National Park profile.
 - a. Annual Establishment of Commercial Rec.gov Account
 - i. The permittee is required to fill out the [Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness Permits Commercial Account Information Form](#).
 - ii. Once submitted, the Permit holder, Commercial Services Office, and Wilderness Office will receive an automated email with proof of submission.
4. CUA wilderness site reservations can be made through [www.recreation.gov](#) after March 1st through the CUA commercial account.
5. **ADVANCE RESERVATIONS** may be made for designated wilderness campsites through the Wilderness Office prior to March 1st under specific conditions.
 - a. Shall have an approved CUA for Guided Backpacking.
 - b. Reservations are for the current calendar year.
 - c. Each trip reservation is required to have the company name, contact name for each trip, date, location, number of days, and trailhead(s).
 - d. For pre-booked trips, each company is limited to 12-nights at the following groups sites: Boulder Brook Group, Finch Lake Group, Sandbeach Lake Group, Thunder Lake Group, and Gray Jay Group to spread the use to other group sites. Concessions staff will review the trip reservations prior to submitting to the Wilderness Office.
 - e. Reservation requests must be emailed in advance to the romo_fees_permits@nps.gov by February 20th each year. **Subject Line: Year-Company-Wilderness Permits** Ex: 2025-Sunshine Company-Wilderness Permits
 - f. Use the form provided by the Concessions Office to submit trips.
 - g. If the Commercial Service office does not receive the reservation requests by February 20th, your reservation requests will not be booked.
 - h. Trip itineraries will be forwarded to the Wilderness Office and each company's name will go into a random draw in the last week of February for the order that the reservations are booked.
 - i. Wilderness Office will reach out to the designated point of contact to review and reserve your trips the weekdays prior to March 1st.
 - j. Wilderness Sites are subject to availability, administrative closures, and use limits.
6. Reservations for trips that will not be used must be canceled at a minimum of 7-days in advance of the first day of the trip to open reserved sites to other users. If reservations have not been cancelled within the 7-days, it will constitute a No-Show.
7. Companies that have **more than 10 permit (trip) cancellations** in a single season may lose the option to pre-book the next season.
8. Reserved permits not picked up by 10 a.m. the first day of the trip (from May through October) will be canceled in entirety and will be considered a No-Show unless the Wilderness Office has been contacted with additional instructions.
9. Companies that have **more than 2 No-Show** in a single season will not be able to pre-book in the next season.
10. Permit holder must take the reservation confirmation to the Wilderness Office to obtain the physical site permit. Verify the trip leader and guides on the Wilderness Permit.
11. Contact the Wilderness Office at (970) 586-1242 for all information related to wilderness camping in the park.
12. Trips shall be subject to the normal administrative charges related to wilderness permits.
13. Checkout time from campsites is noon.

E. Wilderness Campsites

1. All designated campsites have established length-of-stay and party size limits. Camping shall be in accordance with limits noted on the wilderness permit. The trip leaders and guides are included in the total party size. A campsite map/list showing campsite locations, party size, limitations, and other restrictions is available from the Wilderness Office.
2. Wilderness permits will not be written for bivouac areas.
3. Due to impacts caused by group interaction in and between sites (site spread, social trails, etc.) groups (more than 7 people) may not split up to camp in neighboring individual sites in the same camp area. The groups need to be at least mile apart.

F. Wilderness Specifics

1. **Camp Organization:** No permanent improvements such as tables, nails in trees, etc. will be established. For reasons of sanitation, safety, and resource impacts, the areas shall be always kept clean. Proper bear-proof food storage containers shall be used whenever meals are not being prepared. All washing shall be done a minimum of 200 feet (70 adult steps) from any water source.
2. **Campfires:** Commercial operators must use portable stoves. Wood fires are not permitted at any backcountry campsites.
3. **Toilet Facilities:** Use pit toilets where provided. Parties may dig individual holes for disposal of human waste. Carry a shovel or garden trowel for digging small individual holes. "Cat holes" shall be located at least 200 feet (70 adult steps) from surface water and campsites, shall be dug 6 to 8 inches deep, and shall be filled with loose soil after use. Use only biodegradable toilet paper or pack it out. Select sites where digging will not damage root systems or vegetation. Do not use toilet holes for trash disposal. Use of human waste bags are encouraged at all sites. Some sites require the use of human waste bags. **It is the company/guide's responsibility for providing all human waste bags for the clients use for the duration the trip. Wilderness Office will not provide human waste bags.**
4. **Food Storage:** Approved bear canisters are required for all food storage, garbage, other scented articles, and cooking utensils at night and/or when site is not attended/occupied. Cooking stoves not in bear canisters shall be placed away from camp along with the bear canisters. Attended explicitly means that the trip leader is in camp and next to the food, garbage, cooking utensils, and any other scented articles. Strain all wastewater and broadcast strained wastewater a minimum of 200 feet (70 adult steps) away from sleeping areas and water sources.
5. **Site Cleanup:** The areas authorized for use under this permit must be left in substantially the same or better condition as they were prior to the activities authorized herein. All human-made items, including but not limited to food, foil, pull tabs, glass, ropes, papers, plastics, and cigarette butts, and must be packed out. The area shall be left clear of litter and garbage.

G. Specific Conditions for Off-Trail

1. **Off-Trail Travel:** Participants may travel off established trails and walkways to access summits and remote lakes adhering to ethics of "Leave No Trace Principles" Most of these areas are identified as a Management Class 1 or 2 area and groups shall follow specific guidelines to access these areas. These requirements must be met before traveling off established trails in the park.
2. The use of ropes, hardware, protection, snow anchors, crampons, and ice axes are not authorized. Activities that would require the use of such equipment are not authorized.
3. All groups must have a ratio of qualified guides to participants sufficient to permit a safe and meaningful experience. Maximum group size is **12** with a guide to client ratio of **1:6**.
 - a. **One guide should have Wilderness First Responder or higher emergency certification on the trip.**
 - b. All other guides must have a minimum of first aid and CPR.
4. Any route marking and building of rock cairns are prohibited.
5. Keep noise level to minimum to allow for other visitor's enjoyment.
6. Guides shall educate the group on LNT principles and practices.
 - a. Guides are required to take the Online Awareness course on Leave No Trace. It is free. [Leave No Trace: Take Action to Protect the Outdoors - Overview \(Int.org\)](https://www LeaveNoTrace.org)

H. General Provisions for All Permits

1. **Guide Passes and Entrance Fees for Clients**

- a. Guide passes are to be used solely by the Permittee and designated employees to conduct official business under a Commercial Use Authorization or Concessions Contract and are not for personal use. **Guides must always carry this pass while in the park.**
 - b. Guide passes must be always kept with guides in the park, to be presented as requested to park staff to confirm appropriate use and entry to the park. Permittee is responsible for ensuring that its guides comply with this requirement. ID is required.
 - c. Guides are required to present the guide card at the entrance stations along with their driver's license when entering the park to show that they are on official business. Guides are required to inform the entrance station staff of clients entering for the trip; for example, which vehicle, number of clients, etc.
 - d. Clients of the Permittee are not admitted free entrance to the park. The clients' options are:
 - i. Buy an entrance pass – pay when they enter with the Permittee
 - ii. Have a current entrance receipt
 - iii. Have a current pass - Rocky Mountain National Park Annual Pass or America the Beautiful Pass (pass is valid & in the name of the client)
2. CUA Permit Holders and their clients are not authorized to use the fast pass lane for any commercial activities in the park. All CUA Permit Holders (i.e. guides) and clients must enter via a staffed entrance kiosk. Use of the fast pass lane by a CUA Permit Holder may result in revocation of their CUA permit.
3. Frontcountry camping is available on a first-come, first-serve basis at Longs Peak Campground and by advanced reservation at Moraine Park, Glacier Basin, Aspenglen, and Timber Creek Campgrounds. Normal camping fees and regulations, including length of stay, will apply to the Permittee and its participants.
4. Prior to initiating each trip, guides are encouraged to contact Park Headquarters (970) 586-1206 for information on current conditions.
5. Proof of adequate general liability and automobile insurance coverage must be provided to the park prior to operating under this permit.
 - a. Commercial General Comprehensive Liability coverage is required in the amount of \$500,000 per person per accident.
 - b. Commercial Vehicle Insurance coverage is required for all owned, non-owned, and hired vehicles used by the Permittee who transport clients.
 - c. Minimum limits for Commercial Vehicle Insurance are \$1,500,000 for 15 or fewer passengers and \$5,000,000 for 16 or more passengers. Rocky Mountain National Park must be listed as additional insured.
6. All incidents involving overdue parties or accidents involving property damage or personal injury must be reported to Park Dispatch at (970) 586-1204 as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours after the incident and to the Commercial Services Office.
7. All advertisements/brochures which make reference to Rocky Mountain National Park must be approved by the Superintendent prior to publication, distribution, or broadcasting. All such publications must include a statement that the operator is authorized by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, to conduct services in Rocky Mountain National Park.
8. Prior to engaging any commercial filming or still photography using model(s) (posed or on camera talent), set(s), or prop(s) that are not part of the location's natural or cultural resources or administrative facilities consultation with the Commercial Services Office is required. This activity may be subject to a separate permit.
9. Violation of park regulations or the terms of this permit may result in the suspension of privileges granted by this permit and could lead to appropriate fine or citations, as well as non-renewal.