

# Wilderness Stewardship Plan

## Notable Changes for Visitors

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks  
California



### How will my visit to the Sequoia-Kings Canyon and John Krebs wilderness areas change now that the Wilderness Stewardship Plan is completed?

The implementation of changes from current wilderness practices and restrictions—especially changes that directly affect public use—will be phased in over the next few years. Phased implementation will provide for adequate opportunities to inform the public of changes park managers will make as a result of the approval of the WSP/FEIS. You may find further information on the below topics in the Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (WSP/FEIS) and the Record of Decision for the WSP/FEIS. To stay apprised of any changes, please visit the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks [webpage](#) for more wilderness travel information.

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### What are the most notable changes?

**Permits and Quotas:** There are no changes to the requirement to have a wilderness permit for overnight use of wilderness and no changes to trailhead quotas at this time.

**Trails:** A trails classification system will be implemented that includes Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 trails, with Class 3 being the most developed trails. There are 691 miles of designated trails, of which 650 miles are open to stock (95%). Approximately 530 miles of maintained trails will be open to camping with stock. Some trails will be open to stock parties for travel only, some will be open to camping for walking parties with burros and llamas but limited to travel only for parties with horses or mules, and approximately 41 miles of trails are closed to all stock for visitor safety and protection of natural and cultural resources. See WSP and appendix K for details.

*Implementation schedule: New restrictions will be implemented for the 2016 visitor use season; trail maintenance and repairs are subject to available funding.*

**Campfires:** Campfire limits will be the same with the exception that fires in the Kern River drainage will be prohibited above 10,000 ft. (versus current prohibition above 10,400 ft.) to protect downed wood and paleo resources.

*Implementation schedule: New restrictions will be implemented for the 2016 visitor use season.*

**Food Storage:** Food storage regulations will remain the same. Approximately one-third of the existing food storage boxes (25 to 38 boxes) may be removed. Portable containers will be required for overnight use at North Dome, Dusy Basin, Rae Lakes Loop, and Rock Creek areas, and may be required in other areas in the future if there is an increase in incidents of wildlife obtaining human food. In areas where portable containers are not required, counterbalance hanging will be allowed.

*Implementation schedule: Portable container requirements will be generally remain the same as in the past, however some areas will have food storage boxes removed and/or tested subject to available funding.*

**Privies:** Existing privies and restrooms will be evaluated and when they are beyond reasonable repair, or if they are located in unsuitable locations (low-use, close-in areas, where soils allow for cat-holes), they will be removed. The remaining privies will be retained and maintained. New privies will be considered for a few popular day-use areas where other methods have proved unsuccessful. Ten public-use privies will be retained, and three additional public-use privies could be removed, but only after pack-out waste kits prove successful in the test areas.

*Implementation schedule: Privies will be removed, relocated, and/or constructed subject to site-specific compliance and available funding. Pack-out waste kits will be tested subject to available funding.*

Party Size: The following table reflects the new party size requirements.

Type of Trip	Maximum Party Size for Hikers/Boaters
<b>On-trail</b> (day use)	25
<b>On-trail</b> (overnight use)	15
<b>Off-trail</b> (day use and overnight use) Off-trail is ½ mile from a maintained trail for overnight use, and 100 yards from a maintained trail for day use areas.	12 - except for area-specific lower limits listed below
<b>Area-specific:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redwood Canyon: Maximum of 10 people</li> <li>Colony Mill Road Trail; Darwin Canyon / Lamarck Col (includes Class 1 trail area); Don Cecil Trail; Dusy Basin; Mount Whitney Management Area / Mount Langley (includes Class 1 trail area); Sixty Lake Basin; and Sphinx Lakes – Maximum of 8 people</li> </ul>	
Type of Stock Trip	Maximum Party Size for People and Stock
Day rides (not including spot and dunnage)	People: 20 Stock: 20 Combined: 40
<b>On-trail</b> overnight trips (including spot and dunnage trips that support overnight use for those trails where stock is allowed, except where area-specific exceptions apply – see below)	People: 15 Stock: 20 Combined: 28
<b>Off-trail</b> overnight trips (in areas specifically designated for off-trail stock use, except where area-specific exceptions apply – see below). Off-trail is ½ mile from a maintained trail for overnight use, and 100 yards from a maintained trail for day use areas.	People: 12 Stock: 12 Combined: 14
<b>Area-specific:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redwood Canyon: Maximum of 10 people and 10 stock – 20 combined</li> <li>Upper Goddard Canyon/Martha Lake: Maximum of 12 people and 12 stock – 14 combined</li> <li>Sixty Lake Basin: Combined party size of 8 (people and stock) for day rides into Sixty Lake Basin. Trail closed to stock beyond a point 1.8 miles from the junction of the JMT and the Sixty Lake Basin Trail.</li> <li>Miter Basin above Pinned Up Meadow: Combined party size of 8 (people and stock) for day rides on the Class 1 trail into Miter Basin.</li> </ul>	

*Implementation schedule: New party size limits will be implemented for the 2016 visitor use season.*

Camping/Campsites and Night Limits: Campers will be limited to stays of 14 consecutive nights at a single location, 25 total nights per trip, and 75 total nights per year. Exceptions will exist for specific areas. A 3-night limit will be implemented at Emerald and Pear lakes (combined), and Lower and Upper Soldier lakes (combined). Current site-specific night limits will continue to apply at Charlotte Lake, Kearsarge Lakes Basin (basin-wide), Paradise Valley (valley-wide), and Redwood Canyon (area-wide). A new 2-night limit will be applied at Colony Mill Trail, Crabtree / Whitney Creek area, Don Cecil Trail, Dusy Basin (basin-wide), Guitar Lake, North Dome, and along the JMT from Woods Creek Crossing to Vidette Meadow (any one location). The current 1-night limit (per lake) at Rae Lakes will be retained. Hamilton Lake camping limit will be 1 night.

Camping will be allowed in specific areas close to the frontcountry (e.g., Colony Mill Trail, Don Cecil Trail, and North Dome) to allow a diversity of recreational opportunities where risks to resources are low. One or more universally accessible campsites could be constructed closer to a trailhead (e.g., near the confluence of Bubbs Creek and the South Fork Kings River), designed to meet wilderness standards. The first allowable camps by trailhead have been modified slightly (see table 19 in WSP/FEIS). Camping is prohibited on these trails prior to the listed first-camp locations.

*Implementation schedule: New camping night limits, first allowable camps, and allowable camp areas will be implemented for the 2016 visitor use season. The development of one or more universally accessible campsites will depend on site specific planning, design, and compliance and availability of funds.*

Stock Use: Meadows in areas open to stock are available for grazing under a meadow management program with limited exceptions. Seven meadows (Darwin, Grouse, Taboose Pass, Bighorn Plateau, Lower Crabtree, and Chagoopa Plateau) are closed to grazing along the Pacific Crest Trail and High Sierra Trail to protect

scenery for public enjoyment. There are adjustments in head and night limits at specific areas. See WSP and Appendix D for details.

Feed carried into wilderness must be commercially processed pellets, rolled grains, or fermented hay (e.g., Chaffhaye™). These products have a high level of mechanical milling, heat treatment, and/or anaerobic fermentation that result in much lower seed viability. Baled or loose hay and compressed hay cubes, which have little to no processing, are not allowed in wilderness.

Under the selected action, 29 hitch rails will be retained, and 23 hitch rails will be removed. Also, 42 fences/gates will be retained; 12 will be removed

*Implementation schedule: New restrictions will be implemented for the 2016 visitor use season. The removal of the hitch rails and fences/gates will depend on site specific compliance and availability of funds.*

Administrative Structures: Three ranger stations could be relocated, modified, considered for conversion, or replaced: Bench Lake tent platform could be moved to a more suitable location for patrol functions; Bearpaw Meadow Ranger Station will be removed and reconstructed to better meet the area's historic character; and, the Monarch tent platform will be converted to an administrative camp and the footprint will be reduced.

Use of the Redwood Canyon Cabin will be authorized by permit for activities appropriate for the administration of wilderness. The footprint of the facility will be reduced and the external installations (e.g., privy, equipment storage boxes, woodshed, and water system) will be removed. If future use of the structure is determined by the parks to not sufficiently support wilderness purposes, the cabin will be removed, and the area restored. The action of removal will be subject to additional planning and compliance tiered to the WSP/EIS.

*Implementation schedule: New restrictions will be implemented for the 2016 visitor use season. The relocation, modification, or replacement of ranger stations will depend on site specific compliance and availability of funds.*

Commercial Services: Specific wilderness activities that have been determined to necessitate support from commercial services consist of backpacking and hiking, stock trips (riding, packing, day rides, and overnight camping with stock), overnight camping with gear hauling support (stock spot, and stock and porter dunnage), oversnow travel (ski and snowshoe touring and winter overnight camping), climbing and mountaineering (summer and winter), fishing, river running, and photography. The levels and types of commercial services to be performed will be similar to current conditions, except in the Mount Whitney Management Area. A system of commercial service day allocations will be developed for non-stock and stock based commercial guiding services.

*Implementation schedule: The allocation process is under development and will not be ready for implementation in the 2016 visitor use season.*

Mount Whitney: A Mount Whitney Management Area has been designated by the WSP/FEIS. The levels and types of commercial services allowed will be limited in this 37,200 acre area to ensure that use levels do not lead to unacceptable social or natural impacts. An allocation process will be developed for this area.

*Implementation schedule: The allocation process is under development and will not be ready for implementation in the 2016 visitor use season.*

Climbing: A Climbing Management Strategy has been developed. Those desiring to place bolts or pitons (permanent fixed anchors) will need to apply for and have their request approved through a Special Use Permit process. See WSP and Appendix J for details.

*Implementation schedule: New restrictions will be implemented in January 2016.*

Frontcountry Facilities: There are a number of improvements proposed to frontcountry facilities that support visitor use in wilderness. These modifications will require site-specific planning, design, and compliance.

*Implementation schedule: The modifications to frontcountry facilities will depend on site specific planning, design, and compliance and availability of funds.*

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**Where can I find more information?**

An electronic version of the WSP/FEIS with specific details is located at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sekiwild>.

Information on planning your wilderness trip can be found online at <http://www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/wilderness.htm>

If you wish to be included on the parks' mailing list to receive updated information on the implementation process, or information on other park projects or planning activities, please submit your name and email/ mailing address to: [seki\\_planning@nps.gov](mailto:seki_planning@nps.gov), or by writing:

Superintendent  
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Thank you for your interest in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

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