



## Central Cascades Wilderness Permit System Frequently Asked Questions 2022 Season

In general, changes to the Central Cascades Wilderness Permit System for the 2022 permit season were made to simplify the reservation process, to align the permit season with the season of use, and to increase opportunities for the public to get permits.

### Permit Requirements

#### When are permits required?

For 2022, and going forward, the season for wilderness permits will begin on June 15<sup>th</sup> and end on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Previously, permits were required from the Friday of Memorial Day through the last Friday in September, and self-issue permits were required through the end of October.

#### Where are permits required?

##### Overnight Use

- Central Cascades Wilderness Permits are required for all overnight stays in the Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Washington, and Three Sisters Wilderness areas.
- No Central Cascades Wilderness Permits are required for overnight stays in the Waldo Lake and Diamond Peak Wilderness areas. Free self-issue permits are still required in these wilderness areas.

##### Day Use

- Central Cascades Wilderness Permits are required at 19 of 79 trailheads in the Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Washington, and Three Sisters Wilderness areas (see maps). Free self-issue permits are required at the other 60 trailheads.

### How to Get Permits

**How do people get permits?** All reservations for Central Cascades Wilderness Permits need to be made through Recreation.gov either on-line, via the Recreation.gov app, or by calling their call center at 1-877-444-6777 or TDD 877-833-6777. Search for “Central Cascades Wilderness.” Permits are not available at Forest Service offices.

**What is the cost?** There is a \$1.00 processing charge for day-use permits per individual and a \$6.00 processing charge for overnight-use permits per group. An overnight group can be from 1 to 12 people. Processing fees are non-refundable unless the area is closed for visitor safety by the Forest Service.

## Permit Reservations and Permit Availability

### Changes to the overnight permit system:

The overnight permit system has changed the most. The overnight permit quota is now based on the date of entry; meaning there is a daily entry quota for each trailhead allowing new groups to start their trip each day. This change will increase the number of permits available for overnight stays because people will not feel compelled out of caution to reserve more dates than they will use, and people can enter the wilderness every day from every trailhead. In addition, this simplifies the reservation system because people will not have to block out all the days of their planned trip. The 14-day maximum stay limit will remain in place.

This change also means that there is now only one page on recreation.gov for making overnight permit reservations, again making the system easier to use and understand.

### When are overnight permits available?

Only overnight permits are available in advance of the season. On the first Tuesday in April, April 5, 2022, 40% of overnight permits for each day of the season will be released at 7:00 am PDT on Recreation.gov. Once the permit season begins, the remaining 60% of overnight permits will be released on a 7-day rolling window throughout the permit season.

### When are day-use permits available?

No full season advanced reservations for day use permits will be available. Instead, day-use permits will be released for reservations on a 10-day and 2-day rolling window, with 60% of the permit quota available 10 days prior to the day of the trip, and the remaining 40% released 2-days prior.

Last summer there was a significant number of “no-shows” primarily caused by people making advanced permit reservations and not using their reservation.

**Are the quotas the same in 2022 as they were in 2021?** No, many quotas have changed from last year, for a few different reasons.

- Many quotas were adjusted upwards, to account for a higher rate of no-shows than anticipated.
- Overnight quotas were adjusted because of the change to an entry-based quota. The previous quotas captured all use leaving from a trailhead, for every night of a trip whereas the new quota is only for the number of groups starting a trip each day. The adjustments to this way of managing the quota may make it appear that the quotas are lower than 2021 but, the same overall level of use will be consistent or higher than in 2021. This new system also minimizes the impacts to other users if a group does not show up and does not cancel.

**Is there a limit to the number of permits an individual can have?** People only can have three overnight permits at a time reserved. People should only reserve permits they know they will use. Once the ending date of a permit has passed, an individual can make another overnight reservation. The reason for a limit on the number of permits anyone can have at one time is because many people have expressed concern about people hoarding permits and permits going unused.

**What is the cancellation policy for the Central Cascades Wilderness Permits?** If someone decides not to use their Central Cascades Wilderness Permit, we highly encourage them to cancel their permit to allow others the opportunity to reserve it and go on a trip. The processing charges for permits through

Recreation.gov cannot be refunded unless the Forest Service has closed an area due to a wildfire or other public safety reason.

## How to Use Your Permit

**Do I have to stay near the trailhead listed on my permit?** No, once you have entered the wilderness using the entry trailhead and on the starting date listed on your permit, you are free to travel anywhere within the wilderness. You may exit the wilderness from any trailhead.

**When I make an overnight permit reservation, do I need to select where I'm camping each night?** No, this permit system is designed to allow freedom of travel once you've entered the wilderness. When making your reservation, you select your entry date and your entry trailhead. You are free to travel and camp beyond that area once in the wilderness and you are free to exit from a different trailhead.

**Can I start a day use trip at a trailhead that doesn't require permits and then hike into an area accessed by a trailhead that requires day use permits?** Yes, once you enter the wilderness, you are free to travel anywhere within the wilderness. If entering from a trailhead that doesn't require the Central Cascades Wilderness Permit for day use, make sure you fill out the free, self-issue permit, available at the trailhead and carry it with you.

**What if I do not use a trailhead to access Wilderness?** Visitors that don't use a trailhead to enter one of the wildernesses still need to have a permit associated with the trailhead closest to their point of entry into wilderness. For day-use this could be a permit from either a Central Cascades Wilderness Permit trailhead or a self-issued permit trailhead. For overnight use it must be a Central Cascades Wilderness Permit. Avoiding entry from a trailhead does not eliminate the requirement of a Central Cascades Wilderness Permit if one is required.

**Can I get an overnight permit for three days and just go in and out of the wilderness for day trips for three days?** No. An overnight permit is only valid to enter the wilderness on the entry day and entry trailhead that is on the permit.

**Are NW Forest Passes or other recreation passes still required at some trailheads?** Yes, if a trailhead currently requires a NW Forest Pass, or other recreation pass, the Central Cascades Wilderness Permit DOES NOT cover that requirement. Visitors still will need to display the appropriate pass in their vehicle.

## Where Permits Are Not Required and Permit Exceptions

**What about areas that don't require a Central Cascades Wilderness Permit?** Where Central Cascades Wilderness Permits are not required - free, self-issue permits are required, as they have been for decades:

- Waldo Lake and Diamond Peak trailheads (overnight and day use).
- 60 of 79 trailheads for day use in the Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Washington, and Three Sisters wildernesses without trail quotas.

**Are there exceptions to the Central Cascades Wilderness Permit requirement?** Yes, the following situations are exempted from getting a Central Cascades Wilderness Permit:

- Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) Long Distance permit, issued by the Pacific Crest Trail Association for long distance hikers and riders traveling more than 500 miles along the PCT.
  - Camping is restricted to the PCT Corridor and prohibited in certain high use areas. [Maps are available online.](#)
- Hunters with elk or deer hunting tags from ODFW:
  - Elk and deer tags can be used in lieu of Wilderness permits (overnight and/or day) during the hunting season established by ODFW
  - Entry is allowed one day prior to the start of the hunting season and one day after
  - Three additional support persons can accompany the licensed hunter, group size max of four per hunting tag
  - Hunters must have their hunting implement with them, along with proof of their hunting tag.
- Volunteers, while volunteering in coordination with the Forest Service

**What about volunteers who contribute so much to improving these wildernesses?** Volunteers working under an approved Forest Service volunteer agreement who contribute 40 hours of labor in support of wildernesses on the Deschutes and Willamette National Forests will get a volunteer pass, which will exempt them from the permit quotas. All volunteer hours must be accounted for through the two forests' official volunteer programs. Program participation may be capped.

## Not Getting a Permit

**What if I don't get a Central Cascade Wilderness Permit? What is the fine?** We expect people to follow the rules of getting a permit to help maintain these special areas for everyone's enjoyment and use for the long-term. Just like you are expected to stop at a red light to protect everyone's safety without a police officer watching you. We expect you to get a permit whether anyone catches you or not without a permit. Your decision to not get a permit may lead to continuing impacts to these wildernesses and additional requirements to protect them for the future, which will affect all of us. Wilderness rangers can write violation notices to anyone in these wilderness areas without the appropriate permit. Fines for violations start at \$200 plus processing costs, but can go higher and require a court appearance, depending on the individual's behavior and history of past incidences.

## For More Information

**What if I have more questions?** There are a few ways to reach out with additional questions:

- You can contact any Willamette or Deschutes National Forest (as of 2/14/2022, our offices remain closed due to COVID-19, but they are answering phones)
- Visit the [permit information website](#)
- Email [sm.fs.ccwp@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fs.ccwp@usda.gov)

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