

Wilderness.net's Golden Trout Wilderness Fact Sheet

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Golden Trout Wilderness in 1978 and it now has a total of 303,770 acres. All of the wilderness is in California and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

The brightly colored California state fish, the golden trout, lives in relative abundance in the waters of Golden Trout Wilderness, and special restrictions apply to anglers. A large drainage basin surrounded by high, jagged peaks dominates the western portion of the Wilderness in Sequoia National Forest. The eastern portion in Inyo National Forest is primarily an extension of the Kern Plateau. Pinion-pine woodlands rise to extensive Jeffrey pine forestland and meadows at middle elevations, and on to red fir, lodgepole pines, and foxtail pines at higher elevations before hitting the tree line. Two Wild and Scenic Rivers, the North and South Forks of the Kern River, flow across the area. The North Fork rages through stunningly beautiful country and offers one of America's premier multiday white-water adventures, a challenge for the most expert rafter. Summer thunderstorms are common, but water may be scarce away from the rivers during dry spells. Several hundred miles of exceptionally scenic backpacking and horsepacking trails traverse the area. Popular trails include a forty-mile section of the Pacific Crest Trail, and the Cottonwood Pass Trail, which crosses the Sierra and drops into the Kern River Canyon about 16 miles to the west.

Leave No Trace

How to follow the seven standard Leave No Trace principles differs in different parts of the country (desert vs. Rocky Mountains). Click on any of the principles listed below to learn more about how they apply in the Golden Trout Wilderness.

1. [Plan Ahead and Prepare](#)
2. [Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces](#)
3. [Dispose of Waste Properly](#)
4. [Leave What You Find](#)
5. [Minimize Campfire Impacts](#)
6. [Respect Wildlife](#)
7. [Be Considerate of Other Visitors](#)

For more information on Leave No Trace, [Visit the Leave No Trace, Inc. website.](#)

Area Management

The Golden Trout Wilderness is part of the 110 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System. This System of lands provides clean air, water, and habitat critical for rare and endangered plants and animals. In wilderness, you can enjoy challenging recreational activities like hiking,

backpacking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, stargazing, and extraordinary opportunities for solitude. You play an important role in helping to *"secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"* as called for by the Congress of the United States through the Wilderness Act of 1964. Please follow the requirements outlined below and use Leave No Trace techniques when visiting the Golden Trout Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

General Wilderness Prohibitions

Motorized equipment and equipment used for mechanical transport is generally prohibited on all federal lands designated as wilderness. This includes the use of motor vehicles, motorboats, motorized equipment, bicycles, hang gliders, wagons, carts, portage wheels, and the landing of aircraft including helicopters, unless provided for in specific legislation.

In a few areas some exceptions allowing the use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport are described in the special regulations in effect for a specific area. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed below for more specific information.

These general prohibitions have been implemented for all national forest wildernesses in order to implement the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act requires management of human-caused impacts and protection of the area's wilderness character to insure that it is "unimpaired for the future use and enjoyment as wilderness." Use of the equipment listed as prohibited in wilderness is inconsistent with the provision in the Wilderness Act which mandates opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation and that wilderness is a place that is in contrast with areas where people and their works are dominant.

Wilderness-Specific Regulations

Wilderness managers often need to take action to limit the impacts caused by visitor activities in order to protect the natural conditions of wilderness as required by the Wilderness Act of 1964. Managers typically implement 'indirect' types of actions such as information and education measures before selecting more restrictive measures. When regulations are necessary, they are implemented with the specific intent of balancing the need to preserve the character of the wilderness while providing for the use and enjoyment of wilderness.

The following wilderness regulations are in effect for this area. Not all regulations are in effect for every wilderness. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed on the 'Links' tab for more specific information about the regulations listed.

ALL VISITORS

- Group size is limited to no more than 15 people per party.
- Permits are required year-round for overnight trips. From May 1 to November 1, there are daily entry quotas for Cottonwood Pass and Cottonwood Lakes Trailheads.
- Camp at least 100 feet from of any trail or water source when terrain allows. Never camp within 25 feet of any trail nor 50 feet of any water source.
- Maximum length of stay is 14 days per travel zone.

- Campfires are prohibited in the Rocky Basin Lakes and Chicken Spring Lake areas. Please visit the Inyo National Forest Wilderness web pages for maps of the closure areas.
- Food and refuse must be stored in bear-resistant containers or counter-balanced at least 15 feet above the ground and 10 feet away from a tree trunk.
- Do not dispose of bodily waste within 100 feet of any campsite, trail, or water source.
- Do not dispose of soap waste (including biodegradable soaps) within 100 feet of any water source.
- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste.
- Storing equipment, personal property, or supplies for more than 24 hours is prohibited.
- Do not shortcut switchbacks.
- Do not discharge a firearm, except for emergencies and the taking of game as permitted by State law.

STOCK USERS

- Groups are limited to no more than 25 head of pack or saddle stock per party.
- Do not hitch, tether, or tie-up pack or saddle stock within 100 feet of campsites, trails, or water sources, except while loading or unloading.

Wilderness Permit System

A wilderness permit system has been implemented for this wilderness. This involves a mandatory permit, which does not limit use. Wilderness permit systems are implemented to collect information on use levels and patterns and as an education and information tool. People interested in visiting the Golden Trout Wilderness should contact the national forest office or visit the websites listed below for more information about this permit system, which may vary by location or time of the year.

Fees

The following user fee system(s) have been implemented for this wilderness: RESERVATION. Fees are most often used to offset the operating costs of a permit system or to help fund management activities such as trail maintenance. Contact the national forest office or visit the websites listed below for more specific information on this fee system.

Contacts

Inyo National Forest
351 PACU LANE
SUITE 200
BISHOP, CA 93514

Phone: 760-873-2400

Phone: 559-784-1500

Sequoia National Forest
1839 SOUTH NEWCOMB STREET
PORTERVILLE, CA 93257

Links to Other Websites

[Inyo National Forest Wilderness](#)

Links on Wilderness.net

[National, Regional and Local Wilderness Organizations \(NGOs\)](#)

A listing of societies, organizations, coalitions and other wilderness-related advocacy and stewardship groups.

[Career and Volunteer Opportunities](#)

A listing of sites providing information about wilderness- and environmentally-related career and volunteer opportunities.

Applicable Wilderness Law(s)

Law	Date	Acreage Change (in acres)
Public Law 95-237	February 24, 1978	306,000
Endangered American Wilderness Act - Public law 95-237 (2/24/1978) To designate certain endangered public lands for preservation as wilderness, and for other purposes		

[download 95-237](#)