

Wilderness Regulations



Eldorado National Forest Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

Welcome to the Desolation Wilderness!

To protect fragile ecosystems, reduce visual and environmental impacts and help maintain healthy water sources, special regulations exist within the Desolation Wilderness.

Regulations



Pursuant to 36 Code of Federal Regulations the following regulations apply within the wilderness boundary:

- A valid **wilderness permit** is required for entry into Desolation Wilderness, both for day use and overnight stays. Permits not only provide important recreation use data, they have also proven invaluable in search and rescue emergencies.

36CFR 261.57(a)...\$100

- The **zone quota system** in Desolation Wilderness requires that you predetermine the location of your first night's stay. Your wilderness permit will reflect your selection, and you must stay in your selected zone on the first night of your trip. The zone quota system protects popular destinations from overcrowding, which can detract from your primitive recreational experience.

36CFR 261.57(a)...\$100

- **Campfires** are prohibited throughout the Desolation Wilderness. Dead and downed wood is critical habitat for many alpine species in Desolation, and the decomposition of wood plays a critical role in the nutritive value of the soils in which high-altitude vegetation must survive.

36CFR 261.52(a) ...\$270

- Maximum **group size** is 12 persons, applicable to both day use and overnight visitors. Wilderness is intended to provide opportunities for solitude.

36CFR 261.58(f)...\$50

- **Human waste** must be disposed of 200 feet or more from campsites, water sources or trails. Dig a hole at least 4" deep to bury human and canine waste. Digging animals will expose waste buried in shallow holes. 36CFR 261.57(g)...\$150

- Leaving refuse, debris or **litter** is prohibited. Pack it in, Pack it out! Toilet paper must be buried or packed out.

36CFR 261.57(g)...\$150

- **Washing** with soap in a stream, lake or other water source is prohibited. Insect repellents, sunscreens and soaps (even biodegradable soaps) all contaminate water sources. Please help protect aquatic life and drinking water quality by rinsing off contaminants before swimming and by washing cookware well away from water sources.

36CFR 261.11(c)...\$270

- **Damaging or removing** any natural feature in the wilderness is not allowed. Please leave wildflowers for all to enjoy, and avoid trampling delicate lakeshore vegetation.

36CFR 261.9(a,b)...\$250

- **Hitching, tethering or hobbling** a horse or other saddle or pack animal within 200 feet of a water source or within 100 feet of a campsite, or in violation of posted instructions. 36CFR 261.58(aa)...\$50

Special Management Areas

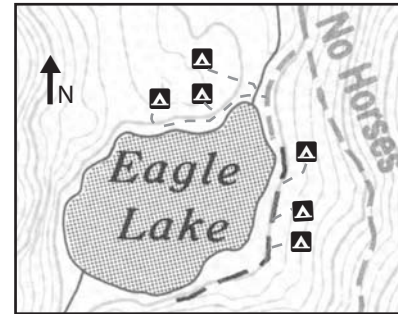
- Camping within 500 feet of Grouse, Hemlock and Eagle lakes is restricted to designated campsites only. Within 500 feet of the shoreline, the only permissible campsites are those designated by a wooden post displaying either a tent symbol or an orange diamond. Further than 500 feet from the lakeshore, you may select a campsite of your choosing. 36CFR 261.58(e)...\$100

Restoration Projects and Designated Campsites in the Desolation Wilderness

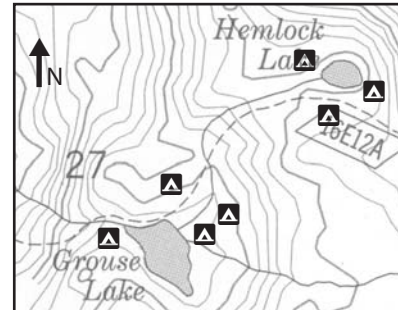
We need your help to protect fragile areas!

The popularity of some wilderness destinations results in damage to the delicate vegetation of shorelines and meadow areas. To promote the revegetation of these areas, specific campsites have been designated within 500 feet of Eagle, Grouse, and Hemlock lakes. The maps below illustrate the locations of the designated sites.

Eagle Lake



Grouse and Hemlock Lakes



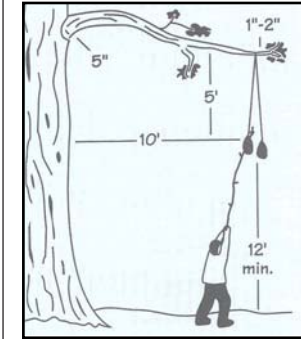
Many restoration sites are formerly used camping areas which are now closed due to their proximity to water and fragile meadow areas. Please do your part by not walking or camping in these restored areas.

Designated campsites at Grouse, Eagle, and Hemlock lakes are unnumbered, and are first-come, first-served only. If all designated sites are taken when you arrive, you must camp more than 500 feet from the lakeshore and meadow areas.

Bears

Black bears are active in Desolation Wilderness. As a result of the availability of improperly stored human food, greater numbers of bears remain active at higher elevations than in the past. Bears have extremely keen noses and are attracted to food smells as well as to the scents of personal products such as toothpaste and deodorant. Please remember that the forest is the bear's natural environment.

Protect yourself by preventing the unnatural contact of bears with humans by using bear canisters for food storage, or by hanging your food using the counterbalancing method.



- Balance the weight in food bags equally.
- Hoist the first sack up.
- Tie second sack as high on rope as possible, leaving a loop.
- Push into place with a long stick.
- Pull down by hooking loop.

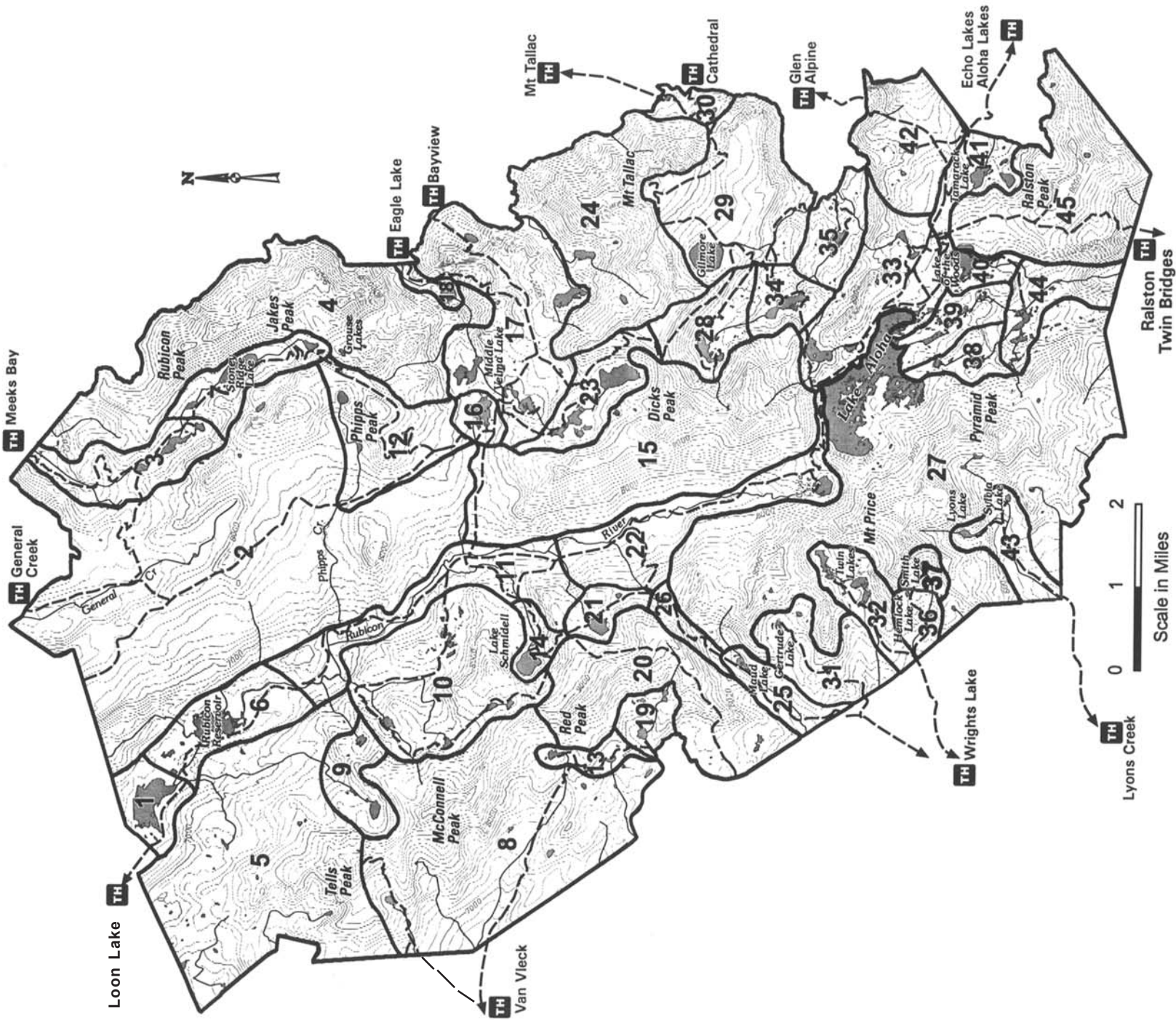
Drinking Water

Treat all water by boiling or filtering through a portable water filter. The microorganisms *Giardia lamblia* and *Cryptosporidia* may be found in even the most remote mountain lakes and streams, and cause intense gastrointestinal distress, including diarrhea and abdominal cramps. The organisms contaminate water sources through the fecal matter of infected mammals (including humans).

Dogs

Pet owners are responsible for the actions of their pets and for the proper disposal of dog waste. The El Dorado County leash law requires that dogs inside the wilderness be under the immediate control of the owner. Dogs off-leash can threaten wildlife or present a hazard to the safety or convenience of other visitors.

Desolation Wilderness Management Zones



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You must stay in your assigned zone the first night of your stay in order for your permit to be valid.