

VERMONT GUIDE TO PRIMITIVE CAMPING ON STATE LANDS



Many areas of state land are available for primitive, or “no trace” camping, free of charge. Primitive camping means camping in a forest with no developed facilities and leaving the site with little or no evidence of human visitation.

Lands designated for primitive camping are usually in areas with difficult access. No facilities are provided, and there are no designated water supplies. Primitive camping is a remote camping experience in a forested setting, not a wilderness experience. Expect to find evidence of human activity ranging from recreational trails to past logging activity, to remnants of the land’s past use.

Primitive camping is also available during the winter. Extra precautions and planning are necessary to address cold weather concerns. Access restrictions apply to most primitive camping areas: some locations might be harder to drive to due to unplowed roads and lack of plowed parking areas.

No amount of regulation will protect our state forest land unless each of us makes a personal effort to lessen our impact. Practicing “no trace” primitive camping techniques and being thoughtful about your camping activities are a good way to start.

AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES PRIMITIVE CAMPING PRACTICES

- Primitive camping is allowed only within **designated areas** of selected state lands.
- Within designated areas, camping must be at least 100 feet away from any stream or body of water, 200 feet away from any trail or property line, 1000 feet from any building, shelter, platform, or roads maintained for public vehicular traffic; and 2500 feet from any developed park facility. Camping is limited to not more than three consecutive nights in the same area.
- Groups of eleven or more individuals must [obtain a permit](#) in order to primitive camp.
- Only dead and down trees or branches may be used for firewood.
- Primitive camping is prohibited:
 - Above 2500 feet in elevation unless otherwise designated,
 - On land leased to other parties and
 - In areas designated as a State-owned natural, fragile, or waterfowl management area unless by written permission of an authorized Agency Representative.
- There shall be one responsible adult for every 4 campers under the age of 14.

Rubbish – If you carry it in, carry it out! Leave your campsite so clean that no one else can find it.

Campfires – The use of backpacker stoves with self-contained fuel is urged when primitive camping. Leave no fires unattended and remove all evidence of campfires before leaving the site. Use only dead and down wood for firewood.

Water – During backcountry travel it is safest to assume that all water is contaminated. Boil drinking water at least five minutes before use. Do all washing, including dishes, away from water sources.

Human Waste – Select a site at least 200 feet away from any stream or body of water. Dig a hole at least 6 inches deep and cover completely with dirt after using.

Remote Shelter – Some areas have remote lean-tos for overnight camping. At these facilities, campfires are restricted to fireplaces or fire rings.

Park Use – Occasionally a primitive camping area is adjacent to a developed state park. Primitive camping does not entitle the user to use a campground’s toilets, showers, beach, vehicle parking area, or other facility unless the user pays the appropriate park fees. Primitive campsites must be at least 2500 feet away from any developed park facility.

“When you camp, never camp where anyone else has camped. When you move on, leave no trace that you have been there.”

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, PARKS AND RECREATION PRIMITIVE CAMPING SITES

Primitive camping on Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation is allowed within designated areas of the following public lands. If you are interested in primitive camping on Fish and Wildlife Department Wildlife Management Areas, please visit [their site](#).

Southeastern Vermont – District I (802) 289-0603	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coolidge State Forest• Dorand State Forest• Mollie Beattie State Forest• Okemo State Forest
Southwestern Vermont - District II (802) 786-0060	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aitken State Forest• West Rutland State Forest
Northwestern Vermont - District III (802) 879-6565	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Camel’s Hump State Park
Central Vermont - District IV (802) 476-0171	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mt. Mansfield State Forest - French Hill, Morse, Cotton Brook, Burt Nebraska, Beaver Meadow• L.R. Jones State Forest• C.C. Putnam State Forest• Roxbury State Forest - Cram Hill, Rice & Vogt• Washington State Forest
Northeast Kingdom - District V (802) 751-0110	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Darling State Park• Groton State Forest - South• Mathewson State Forest• Victory State Forest - East• Victory State Forest - West• Willoughby State Forest

Additional Opportunities

Other land management organizations offer primitive camping opportunities and information. For additional information, contact:

[Green Mountain National Forest](#)

U.S. Forest Service
231 North Main Street
Rutland, VT 05701
(802) 747-6700

[The Green Mountain Club](#)

4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road
Waterbury Center, VT 05677
gmc@greenmountainclub.org
(802) 244-7037