

Pennsylvania State Forests



State forests are Pennsylvania's hidden recreational gems. With more than 2,500 miles of trails, outdoor enthusiasts find endless opportunities for recreation.



Photo by: Al Wiemann

More and more people are exploring Penns Woods. Poor camping practices can destroy the natural character of the Commonwealth's back country. We must all learn to use the back country wisely to prevent environmental damage.



Please Do Not Feed Wildlife

Primitive Camping Guidelines and Ethics

- * Primitive campers spending no more than 1 night at a campsite do not need a Camping Permit. However, a Camping Permit is required if:
 - 1) you desire an emergency point-of-contact;
 - 2) you stay at a campsite more than one night;
 - 3) a campfire is desired during spring or fall fire seasons;
 - 4) you camp using a vehicle for storage or transportation;
 - 5) you are "group camping"; or,
 - 6) you camp within the Pine Creek Gorge / Canyon in Tiadaghton or Tioga State Forests.
- * **A Camping Permit will not be issued to anyone under the age of 18.**
- * When planning and starting your camping trip, **you must: check with the local forest district office to determine where to camp OR if designated dispersed campsites are available;** bring sacks to carry out your trash; take a light trowel to help with personal sanitation; carry a small basin for washing; and, let someone know of your trip plans.
- * Take a little extra time to select your campsite. Make sure it's a well-drained area and where you don't need to clear vegetation. Keep your campsite small.
- * If more than 10 people are in your group, a Letter of Authorization is required, in addition to a Camping Permit, from the District Forester 30 days prior to the date of camping.
- * All camping should be at least 100 feet from any stream or open water source.



Photo by: Chris Rohrbach

- * Wash yourself, your dishes and your clothes using a container. Washing in a spring, lake or waterway is prohibited. Dispose of waste water at least 200 feet from water resources.
- * All campsites must be at least 25 feet from the nearest edge of a trail, and the camp should be out of sight of the trail where possible.
- * Deposit solid human waste in cat holes dug 4-6 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cat hole when finished. Self-contained portable toilets are encouraged and may be required to be used at designated dispersed campsites.
- * Use of camp stoves is encouraged. Small campfires for cooking and warming purposes are permitted EXCEPT when the fire danger is high, very high or extreme and from March 1 to May 25 and from October 1 to December 1, unless authorized on a Camping Permit. Put your fire OUT COLD and scatter the stone fire rings at "new", non-designated dispersed campsites before leaving. Leave stone fire rings intact at established and designated dispersed campsites.
- * Only downed and dead wood within the immediate campsite may be gathered for firewood. Collect only the amount needed for your stay. Power saws are not permitted without a Fuelwood Permit.
- * Cutting, picking, digging, damaging or removing living or dead plant material is prohibited. Edible wild plants may be gathered for one's own personal or family consumption.
- * Horses may not be tied to trees.
- * Horse manure must be scattered at least 100 feet from the campsite.
- * All trash and refuse must be carried out. Leave the camping area better than you found it.
- * Respect other visitors and let nature's sounds prevail. If you bring pets, keep them quiet and under control at all times.
- * **There are no modern facilities, water, dump stations or utility hook-ups on State Forest lands.**

Remember It's Carry In—Carry Out