



Inyo National Forest, Pacific Southwest Region

Forest Service News Release

Public Affairs Officer: Lisa Cox
(760) 920-9915
lisa.cox@usda.gov
www.fs.usda.gov/inyo
Facebook [@InyoNE](https://www.facebook.com/InyoNE)

Inyo National Forest officials urge backup plans this Memorial Day Weekend

BISHOP, Calif., May 25, 2023— As we head into Memorial Day weekend after a long winter season, the Inyo National Forest would like to caution visitors to plan for a safe trip, while also being aware of winter's impacts to its recreation sites. There is also a heightened risk of flooding, rock or landslides, debris flows, road or trail washouts and avalanches.

“This year, there will be a much higher chance your trip may not go as planned due to the extensive damage that the prolonged winter has caused on our trails, roads, and campgrounds,” said Inyo National Forest’s Public Services Staff Officer, Adam Barnett. “We encourage visitors to know their limits and to have a backup plan that allows them to turn back if they encounter potentially dangerous situations.”

Campgrounds and Roads

Visitors anxious to get outdoors and enjoy this spring recreation season will also be met with delayed campground openings and limited access to trailheads and other areas due to lingering snow and road damage. Many campgrounds, roads and hiking trails are also near lakes and rivers with changing water conditions. Water will be colder and swifter with the record-breaking snowpack now melting.

While forest staff continue to assess the full extent of the damage across the forest, roads may need to be closed throughout the summer. Before you head out, please check the following pages to see if the area you want to visit is even accessible:

- [Inyo National Forest Alerts and Notices](#)
- [Inyo National Forest Road Conditions](#)
- [Inyo National Forest Recreation Conditions Report](#)

The Forest has also launched an *Inciweb* page specifically for updates regarding flooding impacts, road damage, and weather alerts: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/cainf-inyo-national-forestflood-response>. This page is in the beginning stages of being built, and more content including photos will be added in the near future.

Additionally, please be aware of winds and avoid areas with dead standing trees. Look up before you choose a trail, park your car, or set up camp. And no matter how tempting, do not park your car illegally and block emergency vehicle access.

Outdoor Safety

This is not going to be a normal year for hiking or backpacking. Even after you secure a permit and start your trip, your plans may need to change in order to adapt to situations you encounter. This could include trail and bridge washouts, trails covered in snow or ice, fallen trees, high and swift water levels in creeks and drainages, and eroding soils bringing down rocks and large boulders.

Visitors should always bring essentials including navigation, light sources, first aid supplies, clothes for changing weather, food and water. We recommend hikers send someone not on the hike a detailed plan of where they plan to travel and GPS location when arrive, in case of an emergency.

If you are headed to higher elevations for hiking or backpacking, your adventure may require technical off-trail navigation and full winter mountaineering skills and equipment. Have a “Plan B” and “Plan C” figured out ahead of time, so if you do encounter a potentially unsafe situation, you can turn around and still enjoy one of your backup plans.

“It is up to you to know what your limits are,” said Mount Whitney District Recreation Officer, Calder Reid. “If you’re not sure, remember the mountain will always be there. Make some plans at a later time, or try again next year!”

Check this page for more tips: [Inyo National Forest Wilderness Safety](#)

Trail Detours

Trail conditions will be extremely dynamic. Specifically, for through-hikers on the Pacific Crest Trail and John Muir Trails, this may mean detours or changes in exits and reentries. For example, a bridge has recently washed out on the San Joaquin River on Sequoia-Kings National Park, causing hikers to detour their trips on other Inyo National Forest trails. Please check the Pacific Crest Trail Association’s website for the latest: <https://www.pcta.org/discover-the-trail/closures/central-california/south-fork-san-joaquin-river-bridge-damaged/>. This website also has a place to post crowd-sourced information on trail issues.

This type of situation is likely to keep occurring on forest trails as water levels rise from snowmelt.

Wildlife

Additionally, forest staff are expecting higher incidences of human-wildlife interactions with bears, skunks, rodents, rattlesnakes and insects. With the record snowfall/precipitation, some wildlife have experienced severe food scarcity and may be more likely to take bold action to find food resources, in other cases wildlife may have fed on bountiful food sources and increased their populations.

“Help us protect our wildlife by keeping yourself safe,” said Inyo National Forest Wildlife Biologist, Kary Schlick. “This means [properly storing your food](#), paying attention to where you're going, and wearing protective clothing and gear to guard against ticks and mosquitoes.”

Plan Ahead, Be Kind, and Recreate Responsibly

Inyo National Forest staff is working in conjunction with its concessionaires and local cooperating agencies to remediate maintenance issues, and will open roads and recreation sites as soon as possible. In the meantime, please do your part to know before you go, and recreate safely.

In addition to the Inyo National Forest website, here are additional links to keep handy before you leave for your trip:

- [National Weather Service - Reno](#) (covers northern half of Inyo National Forest)
- [National Weather Service - Las Vegas](#) (covers southern half of Inyo National Forest)
- [Ready Inyo County](#)
- [Ready Mono County](#)
- [Caltrans QuickMap](#)
- [#RecreateResponsibly | Water Safety](#)

Get Involved

Are you interested in helping repair or rebuild our trails and roads on the forest? There's no better way to enjoy your trails and give back at the same time. Join in on the efforts of our non-profit partners who regularly schedule volunteer event opportunities:

- [Bishop Area Climbers Coalition](#)
- [Eastern Sierra 4x4 Club](#)
- [Eastern Sierra Interpretative Association](#)
- [Friends of the Inyo](#)
- [June Lake Trails Committee](#)
- [Mono Lake Volunteers](#)
- [Pacific Crest Trail Association](#)

As always, feel free to contact one of the [Inyo National Forest Visitor Centers](#) if you have any further questions:

- Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center: (760) 924-5500
- White Mountain Public Lands Information Center: (760) 873-2500
- Eastern Sierra Visitor Center: (760) 876-6200
- Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center (opens May 26): (760) 647-3044

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