



Horses and Pack Animals 2014



Due to the 2013 Flood, those who use Rocky Mountain National Park's backcountry may encounter missing foot bridges, missing trail segments, difficult water crossings and unstable slopes. Please ask a ranger, stop at a visitor center, or visit the park website, www.nps.gov/romo, for more specific, updated information.

Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) provides exceptional access to a wild landscape, and it is up to everyone to help protect this spectacular but fragile place. The use of horses for recreation, as well as transportation, is deeply entrenched in western history. Horses have been part of Rocky Mountain National Park's tradition since the park was established in 1915. Recreational pack animal use is balanced with other recreational uses, such as hiking, and with protection of park resources.

Horses, mules, ponies, llamas, and burros are designated as "pack animals" and are permitted on park trails. Goats, dogs, and other animals are not designated as pack animals and are therefore not permitted on park trails.

Rules of the Trail

To prevent resource damage, the park has some guidelines and regulations regarding horse use.

- Horses and other pack animals may be used *only* on existing trails designated for stock use.
- Horses and other stock are not permitted in auto campgrounds or picnic areas.
- The riding of horses and other stock at a speed greater than a trot is not permitted.
- The maximum number of animals permitted in one group ("string") is 20 for day use.
- Multiple strings must be separated by at least 15-minute intervals (1/4 mile).
- Crosscountry travel and off-trail use are not allowed parkwide.
- Tie up at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Users should clean up after their stock.
- When approaching others, make your presence known.
- Use of stock-drawn equipment is not permitted.

- Trails open to stock have hitchrails at popular destinations. Stock users are encouraged to use these locations for extended stops. Loose herding of stock is not allowed, including hobbles. If it is necessary to stop for a short period of time in an area without hitchrails, a minimum impact technique should be used to keep stock physically controlled and to lessen impacts to trees, roots and vegetation.
- To prevent resource damage, as well as possible injuries to stock and riders/users, those sections of the Flattop, Tonahutu Creek, and North Inlet trails above tree line are closed to all stock use annually from October 15 to July 31.
- Seasonal closures of any trail to horse and pack animal use may be in effect at various locations throughout the park when necessary for resource protection or safety reasons. Such closures will be posted and published.

Weed-Free Forage

The spread of noxious weeds and exotic plant species in the backcountry and wilderness is a serious and growing problem. *Weed-free* is defined as free from propagative plant parts or weed seeds from plants identified in state and regional lists of weeds published by the Colorado Department of Agriculture.

Keep the park weed-free by feeding stock weed-free food. To mitigate the spread of weeds, possessing, storing, or transporting any hay, straw, mulch, or

forage not certified as free of noxious weeds and seeds by a certified State or County Agriculture Officer, is prohibited in RMNP. Possessing, storing, or transporting either certified or non-certified weed-free forage beyond any park trailhead within the boundaries of RMNP is prohibited.

The grazing of stock is not allowed. Backcountry stock users must use feed in the form of pelletized feed, hay cubes, or grain products.

Safety

RMNP is a wilderness wonderland that does harbor hazards. Visitors with horses and other pack animals can encounter water crossings, low branches, other people and stock on trails, and wildlife. Horses can get spooked by packs and other gear used by hikers and backpackers.

Be prepared for sudden changes in weather. Dismount and move away from animals immediately if lightning and thunderstorms seem imminent. Try

to stay below tree line and avoid high rocky areas.

In the interest of public and stock safety due to narrow trails, steep terrain and visitor use levels, it is recommended that only well-broken, properly shod, gentle stock in good physical condition be used in the park.

Carry first aid supplies for yourself and stock.

Trailheads

These trailheads have room for horse trailers; some have hitchracks and ramps.

East Side

Lawn Lake
Lumpy Ridge
Along Wild Basin Road

West Side

Colorado River Trailhead
East Inlet
Green Mountain

Roads

Horses and other pack animals are not permitted on park roads, except on

- Fern Lake Road - between shuttle bus stop/winter parking lot and Fern Lake trailhead - to reach Fern Lake Trail
- McGraw Ranch Road
- Twin Sisters Trail Access Road
- Wild Basin Road - to access trails open to horses

in the Wild Basin area

- Upper Beaver Meadows Road - to access Beaver Mountain, Beaver Meadows, Moraine Park, and Deer Ridge Trails
- Bowen-Baker Road from paved parking area to park boundary
- North Inlet Road to Summerland Park

Temporary Closures

The 2013 Flood caused several trails to be temporarily closed to stock. Closures due to the flood are subject to change based on conditions. Please ask a ranger, stop at a visitor center, or visit the park website, www.nps.gov/romo, for more specific, updated information.

North Fork

Dunraven Trailhead to park boundary on North Fork Trail - currently closed by US Forest Service

North Boundary Trail - stock closure

Mummy Range

Lawn Lake Trail - stock closure (stock can access Lawn Lake via Black Canyon Trail using the Lumpy Ridge Trailhead)

Ypsilon Lake Trail - stock closure

Longs Peak

North Longs Peak Trail - stock closure

Aspen Brook - stock closure

Twin Sisters Area - stock closure

Wild Basin

Wild Basin Trail beyond Ouzel Falls - stock closure (llamas may access the area above Ouzel Falls including Ouzel Lake, Thunder Lake, Bluebird Lake via the Backcountry Site Unimproved trail; horses, burros, etc., cannot use the Backcountry Site Unimproved Trail)

Finch Lake-Calypto Falls Trail intersection to Calypto Cascades - stock closure

Trails

Horses and other pack animals may be used *only* on existing trails designated for stock use.

The following trails are closed to the use of horses and pack animals (exceptions are provided, as indicated, for use of llamas).

North Fork

Lost Lake Trail - beyond hitch rail

Bridal Veil Falls - beyond the hitch rail

Mummy Range

Lawn Lake Trail - beyond hitch rail at east end of lake

Ypsilon Lake Trail - beyond hitch rail at south end of lake

Mummy Pass Trail - beyond Mummy Pass Cr. Jct.

Mirror Lake Trail - beyond Koenig hitch rail

Ute Trail

Upper Beaver Meadows to Milner Pass (open to llama use from Upper Beaver Meadows to Ute Meadows campsites)

Fern Lake Area

Spruce Lake Trail

Odessa Lake Trail - from Fern Lake Trail Junction with Odessa Lake Trail

Bear Lake Area

Bear Lake Nature Trail

Emerald Lake Trail - including spur trails to Dream Lake and Nymph Lake

Lake Haiyaha Trail and connection to The Loch-Mills Junction

Loch Vale Trail - beyond The Loch-Mills Junction

Mills Lake Trail - beyond hitch rail near The Loch-Mills Junction

Sprague Lake Area

Boulder Brook Primitive Trail

Sprague Lake Nature Trail

Longs Peak

Lily Lake and Lily Ridge

Jim's Grove - from Battle Mountain Junction to Granite Pass

Chasm Lake - beyond hitch rail on Mills Moraine

Boulder Field - beyond hitch rail

North Longs Peak Trail - from Boulder Brook Junction to Glacier Gorge Trail

Storm Pass Junction to Estes Cone Summit

Wild Basin

Backcountry Site Unimproved Trail - is open to llama use, but closed to all other stock animals

Bluebird Lake - beyond the hitch rail at east end of lake

Finch-Pear Lake Trail - beyond the hitch rail at east end of Pear Lake

Lion Lakes - beyond the junction with Thunder Lake Trail

Lookout Mountain - from Meeker Park, Sandbeach, Lookout Mountain Trail Junction

Ouzel Lake Trail - beyond the hitch rail near the northeast end of the lake

Sandbeach Lake Trail - beyond hitch rail at north end of lake

Thunder Lake Trail - beyond the hitch rail in woods at the east end of the lake

West Side Trails

Specimen Mountain Trail

Poudre River Trail - Chapin Creek to Milner Pass
Chapin Creek Primitive Trail (cross-country route)

Poudre River to Chapin Pass

Mirror Lake Trail-beyond Comanche Peak Trail Junction

Haynach Lake Trail - beyond Tonahutu Creek Trail (open to llama use from Tonahutu Creek trail to Haynach Lake campsites)

East Inlet Trail - beyond west end of Lake Verna
Long Meadow-between Onahu Creek and Timber Creek Trails

All trails above Grand Ditch except Thunder Pass Trail

Willow Creek drainage to Long Draw Reservoir (unconstructed)

Timber Lake Trail, due to a landslide in 2011

Backcountry Camping with Stock

Stock are allowed overnight in designated stock campsites only. See http://www.nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/stock_site.htm or call the Backcountry Office, 970-586-1242, for conditions, site availability, regulations and requirements.

Stock Site Regulations

- Camp must be established in "stock camps" only.
 - Grazing is prohibited. Carry complete feed.
 - Backcountry stock camping party size is limited to 6 people and 8 stock in designated individual stock campsites.
 - Backcountry stock camping party size is limited to 12 people and 16 stock at group stock sites.
- Hitchrails are provided at all stock campsites (posts at llama-only campsites), and stock must be securely tied to the hitchrail/post overnight. No public corrals are provided. Highlining, hobbling, loose herding, temporary corrals, and other means of confinement are not allowed.
 - Use stoves only. Fires prohibited, unless staying in a wood fire site with visible metal fire ring (using dead and down wood only).
 - Stock users are expected to clean up after their stock, including packing out any uneaten feed, spreading manure, and filling in any holes caused by pawing.