

Gulkana National Wild River Delta National Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River



Low Impact Camping Practices

River corridors tend to concentrate visitors within small, popular areas that coincide with average visitor itineraries. Campsites can quickly become overly impacted by many visitors over the course of a season. If impacts become too severe, campsites may have to be closed and rehabilitated until they can recover.

River crews dedicate early season river patrols to cleaning and naturalizing river campsites on public lands. As the season progresses and workload increases, river crews cannot always keep up with campsite impacts, and rely heavily on river users to clean up after themselves. Your help and cooperation in keeping the river as clean and natural as possible is greatly appreciated.

You can help preserve the river and its campsites by practicing simple, low impact practices during your visit. With just a little effort and minimal inconvenience, your party can dramatically reduce impacts to a campsite and keep the river healthy for future generations.

Trip Planning

- Plan your trip to avoid high-use weekends during the summer months, especially during holidays. Weekday trips during the off-season offer the best opportunity for increased solitude and wildlife viewing opportunities.
- Consider following a trip itinerary that will enable greater flexibility when deciding where and when to stop for the night, as well as launch times. This will help disperse visitor impacts over a larger number of available campsites.

Campsite Selection

- Select an established campsite appropriate to the size of your group, and treat it with the same care you would a pristine campsite.
- Try to prevent damage to green vegetation in and around camp.
- **Please do not create any new campsites within the river corridor.**

Campfires

- At this time, many of the campsites have a firepit. Use only dead and down material for firewood, or bring your own charcoal. Do not construct additional rock fire rings or dig fire pits. To further protect the fragile river resources, the BLM recommends the use of a firepan whenever possible. Pack out all ash and unburned debris with the rest of your camp garbage. Consider not building fires at all, or using a gas or propane cookstove.

Why should I use a firepan?

- A firepan is defined as a metal container with sides sufficient for containing all campsite debris. An open fire built on the ground in a circle of blackened rocks is a

traditional part of many people's outdoor experience. However, such fire pits result in significantly increased impacts to the surrounding natural resources by concentrating visitor traffic, compacting and sterilizing soils, and accumulating large quantities of ash, charcoal, and garbage which in turn requires much time and expense to remove. These traditional open fires can also pose an increased fire hazard during times of increased fire danger. The correct use of firepans allows the use of an open fire with a minimum level of impact to the campsite.

Litter and Food Wastes

- **Pack out all litter and garbage.** Remove food scraps from the kitchen area to avoid attracting ants, flies and rodents. A **scrim tarp** used as a **kitchen floor** will catch food scraps and other micro-trash, which otherwise would be lost in the sand or ground cover. Do not bury trash as animals will dig it up.
- Strain all dish/waste water through a screen to remove food particles, and pack them out. Scatter wastewater over a wide area, away from campsites, at least 200 ft. from the river. Soap should be used sparingly. Pack out **everything** you brought in and leave a clean camp for the next visitor.

Human Waste Disposal

- Due to high costs and remote locations, outhouses are **not** available throughout most of the river. Even where these outhouses are located, human waste has continued to accumulate nearby. Over time, concentrations of waste tend to build up in the most popular places, until they are ruined for everyone. A river campsite can be transformed into a large "cat box" overnight by just one party utilizing the "cat hole" method of disposal. Just imagine how many people will use that same site in one season, day after day. As use levels increase, it becomes unacceptable to leave human waste within the river corridor.
- To address this problem, and to protect the natural resources of the rivers and to maintain a safe and sanitary place for others to enjoy, **all boating parties are encouraged to carry and use a portable toilet during float trips.** This requirement is nothing new to most rivers and is far less of a nuisance than it may first sound. With just a little advance preparation, you can help keep the river banks and campsites from becoming fields of "cat holes" and toilet paper.

Portable Toilet Systems

- There are dozens of kinds of portable toilets available. You will have to decide what method of packing out human waste is most appropriate for the size and comfort level of your group. The traditional "Porta-Potty" style may be suitable for some groups, but most river runners use a toilet system specifically designed for rougher river trip conditions. These designs vary from the improvised and inexpensive to the elaborate, but most are leakproof and can be washed out and reused over and over.
- **Contact the Glennallen Field Office for additional information at 907-822-3217 ●**