

# Wilderness.net's Cloud Peak Wilderness Fact Sheet



## Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Cloud Peak Wilderness in 1984 and it now has a total of 191,914 acres. All of the wilderness is in Wyoming and is managed by the Forest Service.

## Description

This area was managed as the Cloud Peak Primitive Area as far back as 1932 and runs for 27 miles along the spine of the Big Horn Mountain Range, Cloud Peak Wilderness preserves many sharp summits and

towering sheer rock faces standing above glacier-carved U-shaped valleys. Named for the tallest mountain in the Bighorn National Forest--Cloud Peak at 13,167 feet--the Wilderness is blanketed in snow for a large part of the year. Most of the higher ground is covered by snow until July. On the east side of Cloud Peak itself, a deeply inset cirque holds the last remaining glacier in this range. Several hundred beautiful lakes cover the landscape and drain into miles of streams. The forest is a mix of pine and spruce opened by meadows and wetlands. The high mountain lakes are the most sensitive to acid rain deposition in the Rocky Mountain Region as monitored and analyzed by lake sampling. Although rugged in appearance, the Bighorns are actually more gentle than other mountains in Wyoming. The area is now visited each year by tens of thousands of backpackers who hike and horse users who ride along more than 100 miles of trails.

## Leave No Trace

How to follow the seven standard Leave No Trace principles differs in different parts of the country (desert vs. Rocky Mountains). Click on any of the principles listed below to learn more about how they apply in the Cloud Peak Wilderness.

1. [Plan Ahead and Prepare](#)
2. [Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces](#)
3. [Dispose of Waste Properly](#)
4. [Leave What You Find](#)
5. [Minimize Campfire Impacts](#)
6. [Respect Wildlife](#)
7. [Be Considerate of Other Visitors](#)

For more information on Leave No Trace, [Visit the Leave No Trace, Inc. website.](#)

## Area Management

The Cloud Peak Wilderness is part of the 111 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System. This System of lands provides clean air, water, and habitat critical for rare and endangered plants and animals. In wilderness, you can enjoy challenging recreational activities like hiking, backpacking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, stargazing, and extraordinary opportunities for solitude. You play an important role in helping to *"secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"* as called for by the Congress of the United States through the Wilderness Act of 1964. Please follow the requirements outlined below and use Leave No Trace techniques when visiting the Cloud Peak Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

## **General Wilderness Prohibitions**

Motorized equipment and equipment used for mechanical transport is generally prohibited on all federal lands designated as wilderness. This includes the use of motor vehicles, motorboats, motorized equipment, bicycles, hang gliders, wagons, carts, portage wheels, and the landing of aircraft including helicopters, unless provided for in specific legislation.

In a few areas some exceptions allowing the use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport are described in the special regulations in effect for a specific area. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed below for more specific information.

These general prohibitions have been implemented for all national forest wildernesses in order to implement the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act requires management of human-caused impacts and protection of the area's wilderness character to insure that it is "unimpaired for the future use and enjoyment as wilderness." Use of the equipment listed as prohibited in wilderness is inconsistent with the provision in the Wilderness Act which mandates opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation and that wilderness is a place that is in contrast with areas where people and their works are dominant.

## **Wilderness-Specific Regulations**

Wilderness managers often need to take action to limit the impacts caused by visitor activities in order to protect the natural conditions of wilderness as required by the Wilderness Act of 1964. Managers typically implement 'indirect' types of actions such as information and education measures before selecting more restrictive measures. When regulations are necessary, they are implemented with the specific intent of balancing the need to preserve the character of the wilderness while providing for the use and enjoyment of wilderness.

The following wilderness regulations are in effect for this area. Not all regulations are in effect for every wilderness. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed on the 'Links' tab for more specific information about the regulations listed.

### **ALL VISITORS**

-- Group size is limited to 10 people. Larger groups must split into separate groups which meet this limit and remain 1/2 mile apart; even at campsites. Groups may have 2 additional people over the 10 person maximum if a member of the party is trained in "Leave No Trace" outdoor skills and ethics and has a copy of their certification with them.

-- Each group or individual visiting the Wilderness is required to sign a self-issued registration and keep it in their possession for the duration of the visit.

-- Campfires (other than self-contained chemical stoves) are prohibited above 9,200 feet in elevation and within 300 feet of any lake, stream, or trail. Below 9,200 feet, campfires must be contained on a fireblanket or within a fire pan or enclosed stove, so as not to be directly on the ground.

-- Campfires are prohibited at Lakes Number 6 and 7 in the Seven Brothers area of the Cloud Peak Wilderness.

-- Do not shortcut switchbacks.

-- As with all designated Wilderness areas, mechanical transportation (including wagons, game carts, wheelbarrows, bicycles, or other vehicles) is prohibited.

-- Possessing, storing, or transporting any part of a tree (branches, limbs, trunk) above 9,200 feet in elevation is prohibited.

-- Properly dispose of debris including camp structures such as hitching racks, tent frames, and pegs after their use period.

-- Solid human waste must be contained in a leak-proof portable toilet or other self-contained receptacle and removed from National Forest lands in the West and Middle Tensleep drainages.

#### OVERNIGHT VISITORS

-- Overnight visitors cannot camp at, store equipment at, use, or otherwise occupy any single location for a period in excess of 14 days between June 1 and September 10.

-- Any new location occupied following a 14 day period must be at least five air miles from the previous location.

-- A location vacated after 14 days of use may not be returned to by the same party for the purpose of camping during the next consecutive 14 day period.

-- Camping is prohibited within 100 feet of any lake, stream, or trail.

#### STOCK USERS

-- Using more than 15 head of pack or saddle stock is prohibited.

-- Hitching, tethering, restraining, or hobbling pack or saddle stock to a live tree or within 100 feet of any lake, stream, or trail (except when loading or unloading) is prohibited.

-- Hitching, tethering, restraining, or hobbling pack or saddle stock is prohibited at Lakes Number 6 and 7 in the Seven Brothers area of the Cloud Peak Wilderness.

-- All pack or saddle stock feed must be certified weed seed free. Weed seed free products must be certified as being noxious weed seed free by an authorized State of Department of Agriculture official or designated county official; each individual bale or container must be tagged or marked as weed free and reference the written certification.

### **Wilderness Permit System**

A wilderness permit system has been implemented for this wilderness. This involves a mandatory permit, which does not limit use. Wilderness permit systems are implemented to collect information on use levels and patterns and as an education and information tool. People interested in visiting the Cloud Peak Wilderness should contact the national forest office or visit the websites listed below for more information about this permit system, which may vary by location or time of the year.

## Contacts

**Powder River Ranger District**  
1415 FORT ST  
BUFFALO, WY 82834

Phone: 307-684-7806

## Links to Other Websites

[Bighorn National Forest, Cloud Peak Wilderness](#)

## Links on Wilderness.net

[National, Regional and Local Wilderness Organizations \(NGOs\)](#)

A listing of societies, organizations, coalitions and other wilderness-related advocacy and stewardship groups.

[Career and Volunteer Opportunities](#)

A listing of sites providing information about wilderness- and environmentally-related career and volunteer opportunities.

## Applicable Wilderness Law(s)

Law	Date	Acreage Change (in acres)
<b>Public Law 98-550</b>	<b>October 30, 1984</b>	<b>195,500</b>
Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public law 98-550 (10/30/1984) To designate certain lands in the state of Wyoming for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, to release other forest lands for multiple use management, to withdraw designated wilderness areas in Wyoming from minerals activity, and for other purposes		

 [download 98-550](#)