SUMMER 2014 AT LOON LAKE RECREATION SITE

What are the days and hours Loon Lake Campground will be open this summer?

Loon Lake Campground will be open for camping and reservations available on the following dates:

- Memorial Day Weekend (Friday, May 23 at 12 pm to Monday, May 26 at 6 pm)
- Fourth of July Weekend (Thursday, July 3 at 12 pm to Sunday, July 6 at 6 pm)
- Weekends from July 11 to September 28 (Check-in Fridays at 12 pm, Check-out Sunday at 6 pm)
- Labor Day Weekend (Friday, August 29 at 12 pm to Monday, May 1 at 6 pm)

The Day Use Area at Loon Lake will be open seven days a week from Memorial Day Weekend to September 30, from 8 am to 8 pm.

East Shore Campground will be open Memorial Day to September 30 on a first come, first serve basis. This is a dry campground.

Why is the campground open fewer days this year?

The water available in the wells at Loon Lake Campground decreased dramatically last year, and the dry winter has not replenished the water supply. Without enough water, the BLM cannot operate the campground safely seven days a week. Enough safe water can be produced and stored during the week to make camping a fun and safe experience on the weekend.

Why isn’t there any water?

Two ground wells supply Loon Lake Recreation Site with water. One well’s water level dropped and the water quality decreased to the point that it does not comply with Department of Environmental Quality standards for potable water. The second well continued to produce potable water, but it was not enough to maintain the high volume of water needed to maintain the restrooms, showers, water spigots, and other park operations.

The amount of water the wells can produce is closely related to the amount of rain the area receives. With a drought last summer, and very little rain falling so far this winter, the water supply is not being replenished.

Knowing there isn’t much water, what should I expect while camping at Loon Lake?

We need your help to conserve as much water as possible at the site. Bring Your Own Water is the summer 2014 slogan at Loon Lake. The flush toilets will remain open in the campground and day-use area, but the showers and sinks will be closed. Please come prepared with enough water to drink, wash hands, clean dishes, cook meals, put out campfires, etc.
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Why doesn’t the BLM drill another well?

Several additional wells have been drilled in the past with varying degrees of success. Seismic testing indicates there are not significant areas of new water that can be tapped into at the site.

Why can’t I dry camp?

In a lot of ways, you will be dry camping. Visitors need to bring your own water to wash hands, clean dishes, cook meals, put out campfires, etc. There will be enough water to run the flush restrooms in the campground and day-use area. The flush restrooms must remain open to accommodate the number of campers expected this summer because there are no other bathroom facilities. The majority of the water available at the campground will be needed to maintain bathroom related sanitation.

Will the campground stay open for the whole summer?

We are making every effort to keep the campground open on weekends for the summer. That being said, the amount of rain we get this spring and other environmental factors will ultimately determine how much water is available throughout the summer. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee the campground will remain open through September. We will give reservation holders as much notice as possible should the campground need to close early again this year.

What are the long-term plans for the campground and the water situation? Will the campground be open for a full season in 2015?

The BLM’s plan is to provide camping seven days a week in the future in a campground that is less dependent on the historic level of water availability. The lack of water and decreasing Federal recreation budgets have motivated us to look at operations at the campground to see where we could make changes that reduce operating costs and reduce demand for water in the future. For example, we plan to replace the flush toilets in the day-use area with vault toilets before the 2015 camping season. We recognize this may be a tough transition for visitors who are used to Loon Lake Campground the way it was, and we appreciate your patience. With all of the changes we make, our ultimate goal is to provide a fun and safe place for people to camp and enjoy the lake throughout the summer.

Why is the campground check-out at 6 pm instead of noon on Sundays and holiday weekends?

The posted and normal campground check-out time is 12 pm. However, the BLM realizes that Loon Lake will have a limited 2014 summer schedule, and we hope that the 6 pm check-out will provide visitors with enough time to relax and have fun at the lake. The 12 pm check-out will resume when the BLM restores seven day a week camping.