



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Trip Planning Guide

Wilderness Checklist—King Range National Conservation Area, California

The Bureau of Land Management emphasizes the importance of practicing Leave No Trace in the King Range National Conservation Area (NCA) to preserve its unique coastal wilderness qualities. Help keep the King Range Wilderness pristine and yourself safe by utilizing the following King Range Wilderness Checklist to plan your next overnight trip.

Plan Ahead and Prepare: The Lost Coast Favors the Prepared

- ***Did you know wilderness permits are required for camping overnight in the King Range Wilderness?*** Overnight wilderness permits are only available through www.recreation.gov. Special Recreation Permits are required for all commercial and organized groups. Permits are not required for day-use or in designated campgrounds.
- ***Do you have a bear resistant proof canister?*** Hard-sided canisters are required. They protect the bear from your food and your food from the bear. All scented items must be stored in a hard-sided canister. Canisters are available for rent for \$5.00 per canister per trip with a \$75.00 credit card deposit. These canisters have a 600 cubic inch capacity (8" x 12"). Canisters may be returned to any of the following rental locations during business hours. King Range NCA Project Office has a 24-hour drop box. Canisters are available for rent at the following locations:

King Range NCA Project Office
768 Shelter Cove Road, Whitethorn
707-986-5400
Hours: Mon-Fri, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

BLM Arcata Field Office
1695 Heindon Road, Arcata
707-825-2300
Hours: Mon-Fri, 7:45 am to 4:30 pm

Petrolia General Store (5 miles from the Mattole trailhead)
40 Sherman Avenue, Petrolia
707-629-3455
Hours: Mon-Sat, 9 am to 5 pm; Sun, 11 am to 4:30 pm
Note: Accepts cash only.

Other places that rent canisters (call for availability, hours, and pricing):

Shelter Cove General Store
7272 Shelter Cove Road, Shelter Cove
707-986-7733

Humboldt State University's Center of Activities
1 Harpst Street, Arcata
707-826-3357

Lost Coast Adventure Tours
707-986-9895
www.lostcoastadventures.com

Several outdoor gear stores rent canisters. Availability, pricing, and canister styles vary per location.

- ***Have you reviewed the current roads and trails report for current conditions?*** Check the Quick Links.
- ***If hiking the Lost Coast Trail, do you plan to shuttle yourself or use a shuttle service provider?***
The following individuals and/or organizations have been issued a permit for transporting people on public land in the King Range NCA:

Bill's Lost Coast Shuttle
Contact: William G. Abram
707-442-1983

Lost Coast Adventure Tours
Contact: Blu Graham
707-986-9895 or 707-502-7514
<http://www.lostcoastadventures.com>

Mendo Insider Tours
Contact: David Lipkind
707-962-4131
info@mendoinsidertours.com
www.mendoinsidertours.com

- ***Do you know the weather conditions?*** Weather can change drastically; be prepared and have a backup plan. From October to April, the King Range NCA is one of the wettest spots in the U.S. with annual rainfall average between 100 to 200 inches. Snow can temporarily blanket the higher peaks after storms. Sunny weather hikes are still possible in winter during breaks between storms. Scattered showers can linger into early June. From May to September, the King Crest Trail is normally hot and dry with temperatures reaching the 80 to 100 degrees in mid-summer. At the base of the peaks, the coastline sees less of the cool fog that characterizes much of northern California's coast, but coastal weather is still highly variable. Winds along the King Crest and Lost Coast Trails are often very strong and erratic. Check current weather conditions here: [Current Local Weather Conditions](#)
- ***Thirsty?*** Coastal creeks provide a year-round water source. Always purify your water. Water sources are scarce along upland trails. Bring plenty of water. Springs are unreliable during dry summers. Check current water resources conditions on the roads and trails report.

- **Do you have a tide table?** The King Range NCA map indicates sections of the Lost Coast Trail that are impassable at high tide and can be dangerous even during low tides when large waves are present. Plan to travel through these sections on a receding tide. Generally, there will be two high tides and two low tides every 24 hours occurring approximately 50 minutes later each day. During periods of full moon or new moon high tides are usually higher than normal and low tides are usually lower than normal. Watch the ocean! Forceful large waves can surge up the beach at any time without notice. Visitors should never attempt to swim or enter the water along this stretch of coastline. The water is very cold and survival is limited to 20 minutes without a wetsuit. The King Range NCA coastline has very strong undertow and rip currents. Check current tide table predictions here: [Current NOAA Tide Predictions for Shelter Cove, California](#) If you do not understand the tide table predictions, then [click here](#) for an explanation.
- **Are you aware of other potential hazards?** Ticks, poison oak, and rattlesnakes are common sights. Be able to identify and avoid them. Ticks carry debilitating Lyme disease or other diseases. Check your selves and clothing frequently for ticks while hiking in brushy and/or grassy terrain, particularly near the coast. Rattlesnakes can be found under driftwood, mouths of creeks, on the beach, and tall grassy trails.



- **Are dogs allowed?** Yes. Trails are difficult on dogs. Your dog should be in above average physical condition. Special attention should be given to your dog's paws, as the rocky trails can cause cuts or swelling in paw tissues. It is recommended that dogs wear 'booties' for protection. Dogs should be under voice control at all times and on a leash in developed campgrounds.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces: Good Campsites are Found Not Made

- **Wondering where to sleep?** Find a campsite that looks like someone slept there before. This will help concentrate use and keep undisturbed areas pristine. There is a 14-day camping limit.

Dispose of Waste Properly: Proper Place for Every Type of Waste

- **Where's the toilet out here?** When nature calls, dig a 6-inch hole and cover it after you've made your deposit. While traveling on the coast, dig your hole in the intertidal zone (the wet sand near the ocean). On all other trails, go at least 200 feet (70 paces) from creeks, camps, and trails. Pack out your toilet paper; do not burn it!
- **Can you burn trash?** Foil, plastics, and food scraps do not burn and leave impacts on wildlife and other visitors. Pack out your trash.
- **Everything but the kitchen sink?** On the Lost Coast Trail, it is suitable to wash your dishes in the intertidal zone and bury food scraps. On all other trails, wash your dishes 200 feet away from campsites, trails, and water sources.

Leave What You Find: Leave Behind the Things You Find

- ***After your last trip, did you clean your boots and gear?*** Help reduce the spread of non-native invasive plants by cleaning your boots and gear.
- ***So...you heard you can build a driftwood shelter to sleep in?*** As tempting as this may be, please do not build driftwood shelters because they attract rodents and degrade the wilderness.
- ***Want a keepsake from your trip?*** Just remember the little things you find, leave them behind. Take a photo!

Minimize Campfire Impacts: The Right Amount of Heat

- ***Are there campfire restrictions?*** Campfire restrictions typically go into effect mid-June through October. Campfire permits are required and are part of the overnight use permit in the King Range Wilderness. Please check the website or call the King Range Project Office for current restrictions.
- ***Want to build a campfire?*** Please use existing fire rings and dead downed wood for fuel. To put your fire out, please soak with water and stir. It should feel cool to the touch.

Respect Wildlife: You're a Guest in Their Home

- ***Are you planning to fish for food?*** The creeks of the King Range NCA are closed to fishing, yet you can fish in the ocean along some sections of the coast with a license. A statewide network of [Marine Protected Areas](#) safeguards California's coastal resources. Two of these areas border the King Range NCA, each with their own regulations regarding permitted and prohibited uses. For current fishing regulations, [contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#).
- ***Excited to see marine wildlife?*** The ecological diversity of the King Range NCA provides excellent wildlife watching opportunities. Along the Lost Coast Trail you will encounter northern elephant seals near the Punt Gorda Lighthouse. They may seem slow and sluggish at first glance but if they are disturbed or agitated, they can move very fast in a very short amount of time. Weighing 1,500 to 4,500 would make it easy for them to crush you.
- ***Do you know what to do when you see wildlife?*** Observe wildlife from a distance and do not follow or approach them. Use the "rule of thumb" by extending your arm out and holding your thumb up. If your extended thumb is too small to block your view of an animal then you are too close. Stay at least 165 feet (50 meters) away. Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators. Please be mindful of your dogs, which are one of the largest threats to the disturbance and physical harm to marine mammals. If you notice a sick or injured marine mammal that you think needs attention you can report it to the North Coast Marine Mammal Center at 707-951-4722. If the marine mammal is dead, please call the HSU Marine Mammal Stranding Hotline at 707-826-3650.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors: We All Seek Silence and Space

- ***Do you expect to see other visitors?*** Group sizes are no more than 15 persons, though we ask that you hike and camp in small groups (preferably six or less). Keep noise to a minimum, especially during evening to morning hours. When possible, camp out of sight of other visitors. Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.