

Wilderness Stewardship Plan: Food Storage

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
California



Food storage is an important topic in the Wilderness Stewardship Plan / Draft Environmental Impact Statement (WSP/DEIS). Inadequate food-storage techniques too often result in human food becoming available to bears and other wildlife. Once bears discover human food, they often alter their wild behavior and foraging habits to obtain more of it, and will closely approach people. Interactions between humans and bears can result in property damage, personal injuries, and the destruction of bears. Proper food storage prevents wildlife from obtaining food, which protects both wildlife and visitors. The public asked us to consider a range of methods to ensure proper food storage within wilderness.

Desired Condition for Food Storage – Native wildlife subsist only on naturally obtained food, uninfluenced by the presence of human food.

Status Quo (Alternative 1)

There are now 87 food-storage boxes in the parks' wilderness. Portable food-storage containers are required in three specific areas on a seasonal basis for all overnight parties: Rae Lakes Loop and vicinity, Dusy and Palisades basins, and the Rock Creek area. The technique of counterbalancing or hanging food is allowed within wilderness, except in the areas mentioned above from May 1 through October 31.

Posting a guard to watch and protect food would not be allowed under any alternative. Under all alternatives, commercial service providers would continue to be required to provide park-approved portable containers for trips to any part of the wilderness.

Alternatives for Food Storage

Alternative 2 (NPS Preferred): Emphasize Site-Specific Actions to Protect Wilderness	Alternative 3: Emphasize Opportunities for Primitive Recreation	Alternative 4: Emphasize Undeveloped and Noncommercial Recreation	Alternative 5: Emphasize Opportunities for Solitude
Retain 48 food-storage boxes and remove 26. An additional 13 boxes would be tested and removed if shown to be unnecessary prior to removal.	Retain existing food-storage boxes and add up to 35 new ones in key areas (primarily in Kings Canyon National Park).	Remove all food-storage boxes.	Remove all food-storage boxes.
Portable containers would be required for overnight use in the North Dome, Dusy Basin, Rae Lakes Loop, and Rock Creek areas, and may be required in other areas.	Existing portable-container requirements would be modified based on the locations of additional food-storage boxes. Additional food-storage requirements would be implemented in specific areas if the need arises.	Portable containers would be required for all overnight users wilderness-wide.	Portable containers would be recommended for all overnight users wilderness-wide. Additional food-storage requirements would be implemented in specific areas if the need arises.
Counterbalancing and hanging food would be allowed in areas where containers are not required.	Counterbalancing and hanging food would be allowed in areas where containers are not required.	Counterbalancing and hanging food would not be allowed.	Counterbalancing and hanging food would be allowed in areas where containers are not required.

Why propose modifications to existing food-storage techniques and requirements?

While food-storage boxes in wilderness protect wildlife, which results in a beneficial effect on the “natural” quality of the wildlife in wilderness, food-storage boxes can adversely affect other qualities of wilderness and the visitor experience. Food-storage boxes are an installation, which affects the “undeveloped” quality of wilderness. Visitor use also tends to concentrate around food-storage boxes and larger parties tend to camp near them; this can affect the “natural” quality of wilderness due to soil and vegetation trampling in areas surrounding the boxes. Concentrations of visitor use which may occur around food-storage boxes also affects “opportunities for solitude.” Therefore, it is important to weigh the benefits of providing food-storage boxes, the potential risk to wildlife from obtaining human food, and how providing food-storage boxes affects other components of wilderness character.

Where can I find more information?

Food storage is addressed as Element 4 in each alternative. Figure 3 on page 64 in the WSP provides the location of all existing public food-storage boxes. Table 15 on page 101 gives the complete list of food-storage boxes to be retained or removed under alternative 2 (the NPS preferred alternative). The locations of food-storage boxes that would be added under alternative 3 are on pages 143-144.

How can I submit comments?

The National Park Service uses a web-based system, called the *Planning, Environment, and Public Comment* (PEPC) system, to give people access to current plans and related documents that are open for review and comment. Go to <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sekiwild> to find the WSP/DEIS and other documents and maps that will be helpful in your review.

We encourage you to use this system to submit your written comments on the plan. Written comments will also be accepted by mail or hand delivery, or by fax to:

Superintendent
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Attn: WSP/DEIS
47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 93271
Fax: 559-565-4202

***. . . to secure for the American people of present and future generations
the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.***

