



# White River *National Forest*

## Conundrum Hot Springs Overnight Camping Permit: Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. Why do I need an overnight wilderness permit to camp at Conundrum Hot Springs?

- A. The White River National Forest adopted the *Overnight Visitor Use Management Plan* for the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness in fall of 2017. The Plan sets management direction for overnight use which will adaptively address increasing natural resource degradation occurring within the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness. Degradation to the Wilderness includes disturbance of wildlife, habituated wildlife to human trash and campsites, illegal tree cutting coupled with fire scars, trash, human waste, campsite hardening and proliferation. Additionally, there are social impacts occurring on the landscape such as impacts to opportunities for solitude, lack of Wilderness and camping ethics, crowding, overcrowding in parking areas and an increased need for emergency closures. An overnight permit will limit the number of people who can camp at Conundrum Hot Springs per night to designated camping sites. Camping in designated camping sites will ensure the hot springs and fragile surrounding ecosystems have opportunity to regrow and remain free of disturbance while visitors will still be able to enjoy access to this special place.

### Q. How do I reserve a Conundrum Hot Springs camping permit?

- A. **Starting at 8:00 a.m. MST on April 18, 2018 permits to camp at Conundrum Hot Springs will be available for reservation on [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) by searching *Conundrum Hot Springs Permit*, or by clicking here: <http://bit.ly/ConundrumPermit>.** Wilderness Permits are required year-round for overnight camping in the Conundrum Hot Springs Permit Zone. Permits are only available at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). **It is recommended that visitors create a profile at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) prior to April 18.** Ranger stations will not issue permits. Permits can be booked online, up to a day of the trip, if permits are still available for that booking period. *For Winter Use – Please refer to the Winter-Use section below.*

### Q. Do I have to reserve a permit to camp at other locations in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness?

- A. At this time, permits are only required for overnight camping in the Conundrum Hot Springs permit zone. The permit zone includes all of Conundrum Creek Valley from Silver Dollar Pond to Triangle Pass. A map is included at the end of this document for reference. For overnight camping in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness outside of the Conundrum Hot Springs permit zone, visitors are required to fill out required registration at the trailhead.

### Q. Are permits required for day use of the Conundrum Creek area?

- A. No. Permits are required for overnight use only.

### Q. How much does a permit cost?

- A. The permit reservation fee is \$10 per permit. This fee is per permit and is **NOT** per person or per night at this time.

**Q. How many permits are there?**

- A. There will be 17 designated sites available per night when the permit system goes live on April 18, 2018, at 8:00 a.m. MST. **Note:** *Three more designated sites will be added to the reservation system as soon as possible to meet the goal of 20 total designated campsites.*

**Q. How many people can fit into a campsite?**

- A. Each of the designated campsites has an individual capacity of 2-6 people (ex: Campsite 1 will hold up to 4 people). [Recreation.gov](http://Recreation.gov) will specify the capacity of each campsite. The maximum group size in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness is 10. Because none of the campsites can hold 10 people, groups of 10 will need to reserve multiple campsites under two or more trip leaders. **Please note there is a limit of two permits per calendar year, per person for Conundrum Hot Springs.** The permit holder and group must camp in their designated site. If a group of 10 has multiple sites, the group must adhere to campsite capacity and split into groups for camping. Group size may be changed (up to the maximum allowable at the campsite) up until the arrival date of the reservation or until the permit is printed. Once the permit has been printed, changes cannot be made. **Note:** *If all 20 campsites are filled to capacity, there will be 68 overnight visitors.*

**Q. How do I find my campsite?**

- A. Campsites are marked by numbered posts. A campsite reference map is available on [Recreation.gov](http://Recreation.gov). In early spring, late fall, and winter camp posts may be located under snow.

**Q. Why do I have to camp in a designated site?**

- A. Designated sites are specifically chosen to reduce the impact to the surrounding area and consolidate use on durable surfaces. Because thousands of visitors camp overnight each year, it is incredibly important to focus and minimize impacts. Campsites are generally snow covered from early October through early July. You must be prepared to camp in the designated site, even if snow covered.

**Q. How many permits can I get?**

- A. The maximum number of permits one person can obtain in one calendar year is two.

**Q. Can I cancel my permit?**

- A. Permit holders may cancel their permit up to the day of their trip. **The \$10 reservation fee is non-refundable. After a permit is printed, it cannot be changed.**

**Q. Why am I charged \$10 and where does the money go?**

- A. The fee for reserving an overnight camping permit is \$10. This is an administrative fee that is retained by [Recreation.gov](http://Recreation.gov) to complete the transaction. No part of the fee goes back to the White River National Forest for enhanced management and implementation of the permit or Maroon Bells-Snowmass Overnight Visitor Use Management Plan.

**Q. How long can I stay at Conundrum Hot Springs?**

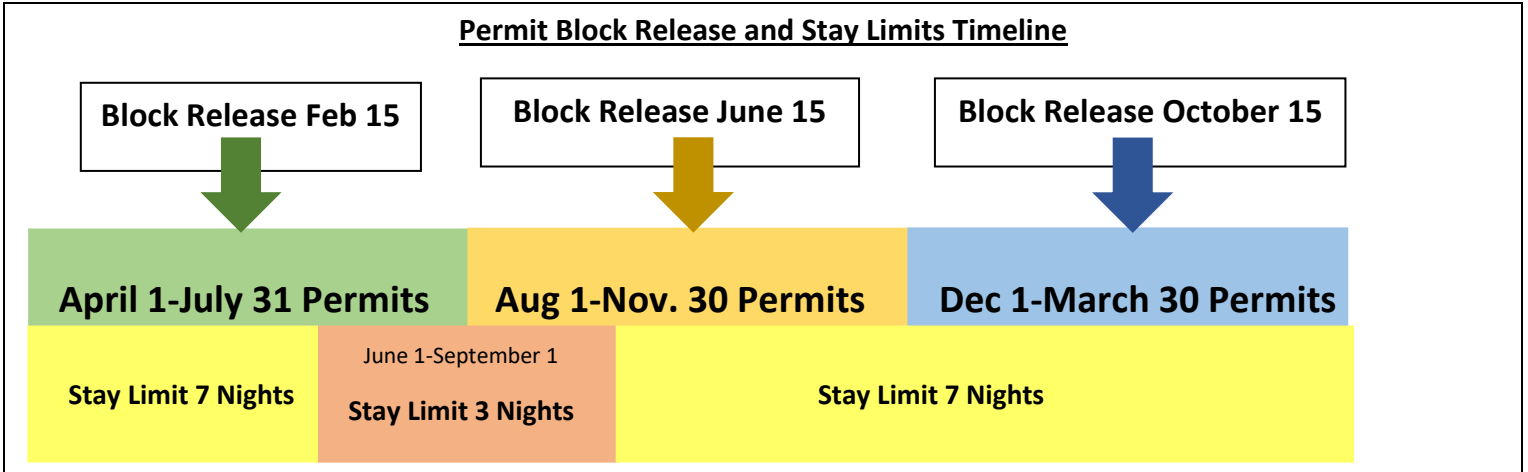
- A. The maximum trip length is three nights from June 1-September 1 and seven nights for the rest of the year. The trip lengths are consistent with the 14-day stay limit on the Forest.

**Q. How far out can I reserve a permit? (please see info graphic below)**

**A.** Permits are released on a “Block Schedule” (First Come, First Served).

Overnight permits will be available for reservation according to the following schedule:

- **Overnight permits for April 18-July 31, 2018:** Available at 8:00 a.m. MST on April 18, 2018.
- *Please Note: Starting in 2019, overnight permits for April 1-July 31 will be available on Feb. 15 of each year at 8:00 a.m. MST.*
- **Overnight permits for Aug. 1-Nov. 30:** Available on June 15 of each year at 8:00 a.m. MST.
- **Overnight permits for Dec. 1-March 31:** Available Oct. 15 of each year at 8:00 a.m. MST.



**Q. I’ve reserved my permit online, now what?**

**A.** Permits **MUST BE PRINTED** and carried by the trip leader or alternate trip leader. Remember: Permits cannot be changed once they are printed. Permits can be printed as early as 14 days before reservation date; not earlier. If you make your reservation more than 14 days in advance, you will have to wait to print your permit. Plan ahead and prepare. Please read wilderness rules and regulations on your permit.

**Q. Are there penalties for camping in the Conundrum Hot Springs permit zone without a permit?**

**A.** Yes. Regulations regarding backcountry use are enforced by Forest Service Wilderness Rangers. Review all regulations listed on your permit and feel free to ask a ranger for clarification, if needed, before beginning your trip. Each individual on your trip is as accountable as the trip leader for abiding by rules and regulations. Remember, the permit and rules are in place for the protection of this amazing Wilderness treasure! Violation of these prohibitions is punishable as a Class B misdemeanor, by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months, or both. 16 U.S.C. § 551, and 18 U.S.C. §§ 3559 and 3571

**Dogs**

**Q. Can I bring my dog?**

**A.** No. Dogs are not allowed in the Conundrum Hot Springs permit zone and are therefore not allowed at designated campsites.

## Stock

### Q. What if I have stock?

- A. Conundrum Creek Trail above Silver Dollar Pond is not recommended for pack and saddle stock. Up to six total pack and/or saddle stock are allowed in designated campsite #18 but trail conditions make accessing this campsite with stock incredibly challenging. **Pack and saddle stock are not allowed at any other designated campsite.**

## Human Waste

### Q. Is there a toilet near the hot springs?

- A. No. WAG (Human Waste) bags are highly recommended due to the high volume of visitors and lack of suitable cathole locations. WAG Bags are provided free of charge at the trailhead. If you choose not to use a WAG Bag, visitors must dig a CATHOLE 6-8 inches deep, 4-6 inches in diameter, and 200 feet (70 paces) from water, trails, and campsites. **Please pack out everything you bring with you, including WAG Bags and toilet paper.**

- For more info on WAG bags:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpiX07wPKgE&feature=youtu.be>
- For more information about how to bury human waste in the backcountry:  
<https://Int.org/learn/principle-3>.

## Trailhead Parking

### Q. Is there parking available at the trailhead?

- A. Limited parking is available at the Conundrum Creek Trailhead. Carpooling is highly recommended. **Parking is prohibited on Conundrum Road.** This narrow road is on a County right-of-way over private property. Vehicles are towed.

## Bears and Food Storage

### Q. Am I required to use a bear canister?

- A. Bear canisters are required year-round in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness by [Forest Order](#), including at Conundrum Hot Springs. Traditional 'bear hangs' do not work at Conundrum and are not an acceptable way to store your food. Failure to comply with this requirement could result in a ticket or fine and you will be required to leave. Certified bear-resistant products can be rented or purchased from local retailers in the Roaring Fork Valley, for a complete list of certified products visit here:  
<http://igbconline.org/certified-products-list/>.

## Winter-Use

### Q. Do I need a wilderness permit in winter?

- A. Yes. Permits are required year-round.

### Q. Do I have to camp in the designated site in winter and how do I find my campsite?

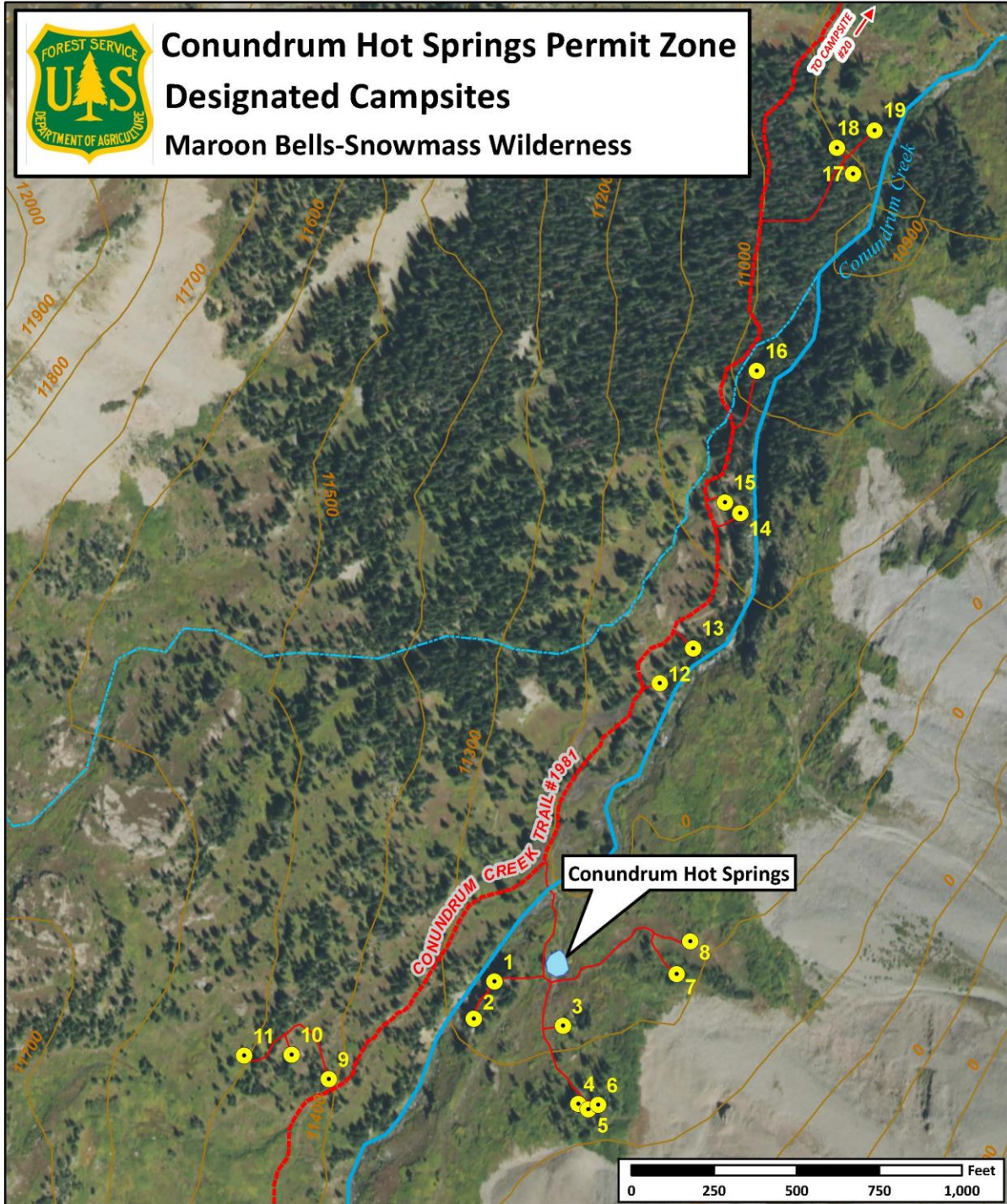
- A. If all campsites and are snow-covered visitors can select an 'on-snow' camp location.

### Q. What are the current snow and avalanche conditions?

Whenever you enter a wilderness area, you are responsible for your safety and should be prepared and experienced for the conditions you will encounter. For snowpack information, please see the Colorado Avalanche Information Center  
<http://avalanche.state.co.us/forecasts/backcountry-avalanche/aspn/>.



# Conundrum Hot Springs Permit Zone Designated Campsites Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness



### Legend

- Designated Campsite
- Campsite Access Trails
- Conundrum Creek Trail #1981
- Conundrum Creek

