



Introduction

Campgrounds are well equipped to handle motorized visitors and RVs but may be unfamiliar with the idea of providing specific services and accommodations for people who arrive by bicycle. Adventure Cycling Association's *Guide to Bicycle Camping*² will help campground and park managers identify how bicycle camping can best fit with their existing services and accommodations to effectively serve cycling visitors.

Why Bicycle Camping?

Busy campgrounds are used to turning away motorized visitors who have the flexibility to drive elsewhere, but bicycle travelers don't have that luxury. After a full day of riding, they need to refuel and rest to prepare for the next day of riding, and often only need accommodations for one night.

Providing bicycle camping shows that your campground is committed to:

- **Welcoming cycling visitors** by providing amenities, policies, and services that are specific to their needs.
- **Ensuring that they won't be turned away** and left stranded after a long day of riding, even if the campground is full.
- **Providing a quality experience** for all visitors, no matter what mode they choose to travel by.



A cyclist pays \$5 for an Oregon State Parks hiker/biker site.

Bicycle Camping Basics

How are cycling visitors different?

People who choose to travel by bicycle or on foot are self-powered, which makes getting to their destination part of the fun and the challenge. They are more vulnerable to unplanned factors such as weather, terrain, flat tires, illness, or injury. This can affect when and if they arrive at a campground as planned. The unpredictable nature of bike touring makes it less practical to make reservations in advance.

With no motorized support, visitors arriving by bicycle have limited alternatives if a campground is full, especially if other accommodations are more than a few miles away or there is limited daylight.

Welcoming visitors arriving by bicycle

Campgrounds can welcome bicycle travelers and avoid having to turn them away by taking two simple steps:

- **Providing bicycle campsites.** A bicycle campsite (also called hiker/biker or bike-in site) is a campsite specifically outfitted for people arriving by bicycle and, if applicable, other nonmotorized visitors like hikers and kayakers.
- **Implementing a no-turn-away policy or directive.** A no-turn-away policy or directive² guarantees an emergency camping space for bicycle travelers traveling solo or with a small, noncommercial group who arrive at a full campground without motorized support. A no-turn-away policy guarantees space for bike travelers only when a campground is full, and they otherwise have to occupy regular campsites, which typically aren't outfitted specifically for bicyclists.

Bicycle Campsites: A Small Footprint

| What makes a bicycle campsite?

- **Nonreservable** — These sites should be nonreservable and set aside for bicyclists and other nonmotorized visitors only. Regular first-come, first-served campsites are not a substitute because motorized visitors have an advantage in being able to arrive early.
- **Shared site** — The space should be able to accommodate the peak number of touring cyclists typical for your area so that no cyclist would need to be turned away.
- **Minimal space and resources** — Bicyclists travel lightly and have a small footprint. Bicycle campsites don't require RV-sized parking spaces, hookups for generators, or giant tent spots, which saves on costs and reduces maintenance. A site that could fit one RV camper could fit multiple bicycle campers, particularly because bicycle campers often prefer shared sites.
- **Separate fee** — The fee charged should be a per-person fee based on the level of services provided (typically \$5–10), which is usually less than other RV or tent sites.
- **Bicycle-specific amenities** — The amenities listed below require relatively small investment but improve bicycle travelers' camping experiences immensely. See page 7 for more information about these amenities.

"Hiker/bikers pay per person, making the site revenue on par with other sites when considered on a per-person basis, yet hiker/biker sites are often much less expensive and use far less land than other camping options."

— Oregon State Parks, 2014 Survey Report



A hiker/biker site at Oregon State Parks.



N. LEWIS, SHEPANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

No-Turn-Away Policies: No Visitor Left Stranded

A no-turn-away policy typically allows for:

- **One-night accommodation for cyclists touring without motorized support**
- **Is not guaranteed for large or commercial tour groups if space is limited**
- **A fee consistent with the level of service provided**
- **At minimum a tent space and a place to park a bike**
- **Other amenities can be provided if possible**

A no-turn-away policy is recommended for all campgrounds, but is particularly necessary for campgrounds without bicycle campsites. A bicycle campsite is preferred because it is a shared site that should provide a no-turn-away function by accommodating the peak number of cycling visitors.

All no-turn-away bike camping policies are available to download at adventurecycling.org/noturnaway. For examples of no-turn-away policies, see page 29.

Make it official

Many park campgrounds “unofficially” don’t turn away visitors arriving by bicycle, and it’s common to think that a no-turn-away policy isn’t necessary. However, we have heard from bicycle travelers who have been turned away from both campgrounds with policies and without them, so making an official written policy is critical to ensuring that it is followed consistently.

Why officially adopt a no-turn-away policy?

- It communicates the existence of the policy to the public as well as campground staff and hosts.
- It allows for consistent training and implementation of the policy.
- It can be referenced by bicycle travelers if it is not being implemented consistently.

Nuts and Bolts of Bicycle Camping

There are many practical and logistical considerations for implementing bicycle camping, including what kinds of amenities to provide and how to determine demand and location. These factors can vary, but this information will help you evaluate what will work best for your campground.

Amenities

Bicycle travelers are generally self-sufficient and prepared and need at minimum a place to set up their tent and park their bicycle. However, a few simple amenities can vastly improve their camping experience.

| Bike Parking



Bike racks should provide two points of contact with the bike frame, not the wheel, to support the weight of a loaded bike.

| Bike Repair Stations



Bike repair can include any or all of the elements shown, including the bike stand or clamp, tools, and floor pump.

| Lockers



Lockers are most useful when they provide secure storage for food and valuables.

| Group Picnic Area



At minimum, a covered group picnic area should be provided. If resources allow, some campgrounds provide an enclosed space with a fully equipped kitchen.

| Electrical Outlets



Electrical outlets can be solar-powered and are best located either in a secure place (inside of lockers) or at another central place like the group picnic area.

| Showers



Showers are always welcome at the end of a long day of cycling. They're not essential but are a popular amenity.