

# Idaho City Area Yurts Summer Manual

## INTRODUCTION

This manual will provide you with important information concerning the Idaho City yurt system. It is essential that you and all members of your party read through this information before embarking on a tour to any of the yurts.

After reading this material, make a careful and honest evaluation of your party's abilities. Please be aware that backcountry travel by horse, mountain bike, or foot can be dangerous. Travel to and from and use of the yurts is done at your own risk.

## BACKGROUND

The Idaho City yurt system started in the fall of 1996 with the first one placed at the Banner Ridge location. From its inception, the yurt system was intended as a means for outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy the beauty of Idaho's mountains year round. To accomplish this, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho City Ranger District, and dedicated volunteers worked cooperatively together, providing material, labor, and expertise to make the system a reality.

Funding to build the yurts came from a variety of sources: a National Recreation Trails Program grant; Park N' Ski monies; and volunteer labor/donations. Monies generated from yurt rentals are first used to maintain the existing yurts. Any additional income generated is used to operate, maintain and improve the surrounding trail network. This network includes mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, Nordic ski and snowshoe trails.

## RESERVATION INFORMATION

Reservations for stays in IDPR Idaho City Backcountry Yurts can be made online at [www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov](http://www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov) or by calling 1-888-922-6743. Reservations are accepted 9-months in advance of your intended stay and no later than 48 hours prior to your intended arrival. For reservations less than 48 hours prior to arrival, call 208-514-2418 or 208-514-2419. A non-refundable fee of \$10 is assessed at the time your reservation is made. All fees must be paid in advance of your stay.

## FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING THE YURTS

**Contact:** DeEtta Petersen at 208-514-2418

Reservations are from 2:00 pm check-in with a 1:00 pm check out.

The maximum length of stay is 14 days in any given 30-day period.

Maximum number of persons sleeping in yurts is 6.

### **To get the “Yurt Access Code”**

**E-mail:** [deetta.petersen@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:deetta.petersen@idpr.idaho.gov) you will receive code by email

**Phone:** DeEtta Petersen at 208-781-2296 (at least a couple days prior to trip)

**Be certain to include:** Name of yurt booked, reservation number, guest contact name and phone number and please allow a minimum 2 day for a response.

### **TRIP PLANNING**

Carefully read this material and evaluate yourself and your party. If you feel confident that you have the skills and knowledge to undertake a yurt tour safely, follow these steps: Check equipment lists (suggested lists are included) prior to departing. Make sure everyone in your party is properly prepared.

Before leaving, always tell a friend or relative where you are going, your route and when you plan to return. If for some reason they are concerned about your return, the following numbers are for reporting any problems or emergencies concerning the yurts: Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation: 208- 514-2418 or 208-514-2419.

Before departing, make sure your vehicle is in good condition. High clearance, 4 wheel drive vehicles are recommended.

### **SUMMER WATER SOURCE:**

**You must haul in your drinking water in the spring, summer and fall seasons.** We recommend you haul it in on a wagon or wheelbarrow. Except for the Elkhorn yurt, a wheelbarrow is provided at each yurt for your convenience. *A water tank is located on site and is refilled about every three weeks. This water is not for drinking but may be used for cleaning and washing. Please conserve this so others have water for their stay.* Each individual yurt guide describes more specifically the water issues please be certain to read them on the Parks and Recreation website.

### **NON MOTORIZED USE**

Motorized vehicles including motorcycles, ATV's, and 4-wheel drives are not allowed at the yurt sites. The US Forest Service Travel Plan map can be purchased from the Forest Service in Idaho City or at the Boise National Forest office in Boise. Motorized use in non-motorized areas and trails can carry a penalty or fine up to \$5,000.00 and or 6 months in jail. Many roads in the surrounding areas are open to motorized vehicles during non-snow months.

### **PARKING AND ROUTES TO YURT**

A detailed description of parking and yurt routes are found in each specific yurt guide. Carefully study the Boise National Forest map and the maps located on our web site. Before attempting any yurt tour you should be experienced in the use of a map and compass, and carry both with you on the tour. Workshops and classes are offered periodically by Boise State University and Boise Community Education to help you learn map and compass skills. We recommend you first learn the location of the yurt by taking a day trip prior to your reserved time.

## ON THE TRAIL

Whether hiking, biking, or horseback riding to the yurt, don't allow your party to become separated. All adult trip participants should have an Idaho City Area Yurt and Trail System map and the yurt specific map. You can download and print the yurt maps from: [www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov](http://www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov). At the opening screen click on "Find an Activity" and then on yurts. Scroll down until you see Idaho City Back country Yurts and click on the link. **Stay together**, this is extremely important in bad weather. Travel at a pace, which is comfortable for the slowest member of the party. If one member becomes exhausted, your entire party is weakened as a result. A slow, steady pace is time-tested and a safe way of traveling in a group.

## ITEMS AT THE YURT

In each yurt, you should find a futon bed, two bunk beds with mattresses, a table and kitchen cabinet, folding chairs, a two-burner propane stove, 4 LED lights and panel, propane lanterns, a wood stove, log rack, tinder bucket, assorted silverware, plates bowls, and cups, a water jug, assorted cooking pots and pans, miscellaneous kitchen equipment, a mop, broom, dust pan, dome opener, floor towels, ladder, and a fire extinguisher. Located outside: an axe and buck saw, a primitive toilet, a fire pit, a picnic table, and a woodpile. We cannot guarantee all the items listed will be in the yurt. Because of the remote location, it may take us a week or two to replace/repair the item(s). Be prepared and adaptable enough to survive without these items.

## LANTERNS, STOVES, AND FIRES

Each yurt has a wood stove, a two-burner propane stove for cooking and two (2) propane lanterns that use mantles. **You need to bring at least two, one-pound bottles of propane for each night you plan to stay.** The standard screw-in propane disposable fuel bottle is used in the cooking stove and the lanterns. Carefully read the directions for the stove and lanterns. Leaving the propane valve on and not lighting immediately will form a large invisible cloud which, when lit, may cause a dangerous fireball which could singe hair and cause serious injury.

### Warnings on Propane Use:

Always make sure valves for the stove and lanterns are turned off when not in use. If not, the wood-burning stove could ignite the gas. Attach or detach cylinders away from ignition sources and only when stove or lanterns are cool to touch. Propane is heavier than air and will accumulate in low places. If you smell gas, leave immediately and ventilate area. Never store propane near the wood stove or when temperature exceeds 120 degrees.

### PROPANE LANTERN DIRECTIONS:

The lanterns are hung from the ceiling by ropes on a pulley system. Lower the lanterns for cylinder replacement or lighting. Be careful not to let the lantern hang at eye level or drop them on the floor. The mantles break easily.

To replace mantles, turn off gas valve and remove old mantles. Tie new mantles around groove in burner. Spread mantle out evenly, light bottom of mantle evenly and burn until nothing but white ash remains. Once the mantle is burned, it is very fragile. Be careful not to

touch it with a finger or a match. To light, place a lighted match in the match hole on bottom of lantern and turn on gas valve.

**Note:** To reduce fuel consumption and noise, turn fuel valve down to halfway on after the lantern is lit.

### **PROPANE STOVE DIRECTIONS:**

Make sure all connections from the propane bottle to stove are hand tight. To light, hold lighted match near burner and open burner valve. To turn off, close burner valve firmly. Before you leave, please clean the stove and tray area thoroughly.

### **WOOD STOVE DIRECTIONS:**

Clean stove window with window cleaner that is provided. Use newspaper or paper towels to wipe window clean. To prevent smoke from filling the yurt, it is important to start a large flash fire immediately to preheat the chimney. Place 5 or more sheets of loosely crumpled newspaper (located in the cabinet) in the stove and cover with thumb-size dry kindling. Open the draft control by pulling the handle forward to the high position. The handle is located on the front and center of the stove just below the door.

Light the newspaper and leave the door slightly ajar (1/8 inch) until all kindling is burning and a hot coal bed is established. Slowly add larger wood (2x4 size pieces). Lay pieces lengthwise from side-to-side in the hot coal bed with a shallow trench between so that the air can flow directly into the trench and ignite the fuel above. When the fire seems to be at its peak, medium-size logs may be added. Once these logs catch fire and the temperature gauge on the stovepipe reaches 320 degrees, slowly close the door. (Closing the door before the fire has a nice bed of hot coals can reduce the fire box temperature, resulting in an inefficient fire, smoke, and dirty glass.)

Achieving the proper draft is important. The draft can be adjusted for a low-burn rate with the handle fully in or to a fast-burn rate with the handle fully out. In the evening before bed, load the stove at least a half hour before bed to ensure a good fire, hot enough to lower the draft control for an overnight burn. For an overnight burn, set the draft control on a low setting. The ashes in the firebox tend to burn themselves up. IDPR staff will clean out ashes as necessary. If however, you need to remove them, use the marked ash bucket and dump the ashes at least 200' from the yurt. **DO NOT DUMP ASHES OVER THE SIDE OF THE DECK OR IN THE PIT TOILETS.** Don't burn garbage or plastics because they leave a toxic, sticky residue in the chimney, which can cause a chimney fire. Don't hang anything above the wood stove or place anything combustible within 36 inches of the stove (boots, clothing, wood, or paper). Don't burn at continually low settings. If the glass door is constantly blackened it means that the firebox temperature is too low.

### **FIRE PIT DIRECTIONS:**

Do not use the split wood from the firewood pile; it is reserved for the wood stove. Make only small fires using the dead wood that is lying on the ground near the yurt. This will help alleviate fire hazards in the area by cleaning up slash piles. A bucksaw is provided to assist you in cutting wood. Please do not put rock or other non-flammable material (aluminum foil or glass

bottles) in the fire pit. These items are hard to remove and make it difficult to start fires. Do not have fires during high winds and dry conditions. A major wildfire will likely burn all yurts and the yurt and trail system will be abandoned. Make sure to follow the US Forest Service fire restrictions.

Please drown the fire with plenty of water, stir it, and drown it again. When extinguishing fires, **do not use soil** or other material to smother the fire. This only insulates the coals. Numerous fires have been traced to burying the coals only to have them re-ignite later.

## OPENING, CLOSING AND DAILY PROCEDURES

It is very important to follow these procedures. A checklist is posted in the yurts for your convenience. There is minimal staff to operate and maintain the yurts, so we trust that your group will assist us in keeping the yurts in good condition for the next party.

### WHEN YOU ARRIVE:

1. When the plastic winter windows are removed, roll the storm flaps up. The window storm flaps should be secured down when you arrive. If it is warm inside the yurt or if you prefer a view, roll up the storm flaps.
2. Open the clear plastic dome with the dome opener located on the wall behind the wood stove. By opening the dome you can quickly cool the interior of the yurt. We ask that you close the window flaps and dome any time you leave for more than a couple of hours or when a storm is pending. A strong storm could arise while you are out and cause damage to the dome, flaps, or yurt.
3. For sanitary reasons, always use the toilet for defecating. The marked grey water drainpipe near the yurt must be used for dirty dishwater disposal. This helps keep animals from being attracted to food smells.
4. If needed clean the wood stove window before you start a fire. Please use the directions noted on the yurt wall to prevent smoke from filling the yurt.

### DAILY PROCEDURES:

1. The yurt is a no smoking building. Please do not drop cigarette butts over the side of the deck.
2. Please wipe up any excess moisture on the floors with the floor towels or sponge mop provided. Water from boots, clothes, and wood will penetrate the wood floor, causing it to swell and hastening its replacement.
3. To prevent the transmission of germs between persons and groups, please wash dishes using the three-step (tub) method noted below:
  - **Step 1:** Fill all three tubs with water. Use the biodegradable soap provided to wash the dishes, then rinse in clean water and dip into the final bleach rinse. To make a bleach water rinse, add a teaspoon of liquid bleach (located in the cabinet) to cold rinse water.

- **Step 2:** Shake excess water off the dishes and place on the wood dish drying rack provided. Do not wipe dry with a cloth. Use a clean paper towel to wipe down the cabinet and tabletop.
  - **Step 3:** After washing and clean up, dump the tubs at the grey water pole outside.
4. Dogs and pets are not allowed on yurt furniture. Dogs and pets are allowed at the yurt site when the trails are not groomed for cross-country skiing, generally April 15th through December 1st. Dogs are allowed at the Rocky Ridge yurt year-round.
  5. Equestrians and other pack- stock should follow standard low-impact backcountry camping procedures to minimize damage to the site.
  6. We ask that hunters using the yurt use common sense. Do not discharge any firearm within ¼ mile of the yurt.
  7. Do not put mattresses on the floor
  8. Please do not chop wood on the stone hearth.
  9. Please make a journal entry in the yurt logbook during your stay.

### PROCEDURES WHEN YOU LEAVE:

1. Thoroughly clean the yurt, especially under the beds. Sweep out dirt, wood chips with the broom. Even crumbs may attract rodents, ants or bears. Carry out all garbage and food to prevent rodent infestations or animals eating through the yurt walls.
2. Wipe down the table, and kitchen cabinet. Place all cooking pots/pans/bowls upside down in cabinet so mice do not dance and water does not sit in them.
3. Pack out what you packed in. **All food must be carried out April 30th through November 15th.** This will discourage wild animals from trying to break into the yurt. You may leave extra propane bottles, but carry out the empty ones. Anything left in the yurt has to be carried out by volunteers.
4. Empty water from the water jug and coffee pots so they do not mildew. Leave lid off of water jug.
5. Move any flammable materials such as paper and kindling away from wood stove.
6. Restock the yurt with wood and kindling from woodpile, so the next group will have dry wood when they enter.
7. Wipe down the toilet seat and close seat cover and sweep the outhouse floor.
8. Turn off solar powered light switches.
9. Make sure gas valves are turned off on the propane stove and lanterns.
10. Return hanging items to their proper location (broom, dome opener, buck saw, fire poker, axe and dust pan).
11. Make sure plastic dome is securely shut and window storm flaps are rolled down. Be sure not to over tighten the plastic dome because it may crack, allowing water to seep in. A new dome costs \$500.00
12. Make sure the fire is out in the fire pit. The coals should be cool to the touch. Drown the fire with plenty of water, stir and drown it again. **Do not use soil to smother the fire.** Pack out any tin foil or non-burnable garbage.
13. Securely shut yurt door and make sure it is locked.

## SAFETY

Everything you do on a backcountry tour should be done carefully. Use common sense and care when using the wood stove, propane stove and lanterns, starting the fire, chopping wood, etc. It's about three-hours to the nearest hospital. The closest public telephone is in Lowman and the second closest is the rest area in downtown Idaho City. Call the Boise County Sheriff at **208/392-4411** or in a medical emergency: **911**. There is cell phone coverage for most cell phone systems at the high point on the Elkhorn trail once you're on top of the Banner Ridge. There is also coverage along the Stargaze trail near Highway 21.

## SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT LIST

The equipment listed below is included as a guide to help you prepare for a yurt trip. Dressing in layers is the best choice for outdoor activities. As you get warm you can take off layers, and as you cool down during breaks, you can put them back on. Feel free to photocopy this equipment list and pass on to all members of the party.

### PERSONAL:

- sleeping bag / fitted sheet for bunk
- pillow - inflatable saves space
- backpack
- sunglasses
- headlamp or small flashlight
- matches in a waterproof container
- lighter and fire starter
- basic first aid kit
- high energy trail snacks
- emergency whistle
- large water bottle
- Idaho City Area Yurt and Trail System map
- Specific yurt guide and location map
- compass
- small knife
- toothbrush and paste
- underwear
- socks
- gloves
- jacket
- shirts
- shorts/pants
- sun hat
- windproof/waterproof shell jacket and hood
- personal medications
- watch

### OPTIONAL:

- bicycle and repair kit
- wheelbarrow or bike trailer for hauling equipment
- camera and extra film
- binoculars
- day or belt pack
- slippers
- extra flashlight batteries and bulb
- small cooler for ice

### GROUP:

- yurt door lock combination
- 2 screw-in, one pound propane canisters for each day of your stay
- paper towels
- 7.5 minute quadrangle map
- Boise National Forest map
- sun screen lotion
- sun screen lip block
- water filter or water jug

- **first aid kit** that includes:
  - first aid book
  - moleskin gauze rolls
  - chemical heat pack
  - ace bandage
  - 2" first-aid tape
  - assorted band aids including butterfly
  - triangular bandages and sterile pads
  - anti-acid tablets
  - strong pain medication
  - ibuprofen tablets
  - antiseptic wound cleaner
  - body thermometer
  
  - latex gloves
  - tweezer/scissor/nail clipper
  - small mirror
  
- **emergency and repair kit** that includes:
  - small roll of duct or strapping tape
  - stick-on nylon patches
  - nylon cord/braided wire
  - safety pins
  
- **food and drink**