

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 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 208-334-4199. 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.

Questions about the yurts call your:

**Yurt Coordinator @ 208.514.2418 or 208.781.2296 (cell) or
Non-Motorized Trails Manager @ 208.514.2419 or 208.781.0055 (cell)**

- The maximum length of stay is 14 days in any given 30-day period
- Maximum number of persons sleeping in yurts is 6
- Maximum number of persons using a yurt site is 9 with prior approval.
✓ **Call 208.514.2418 for permission**

Reservations are from 3:00 pm check-in with a 11:00 am check-out

To get the “Yurt Access Code”

E-mail: You will receive your yurt code with your reservation confirmation email prior to your reservation date. If you have not received this confirmation email or you have further questions you may contact your yurt coordinator at deetta.petersen@idpr.idaho.gov or by phone at 208.781.2296.

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:

1. Watch the Yurt Orientation Video online at [Idaho City Backcountry Yurts | Department of Parks and Recreation](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Idaho City Backcountry Yurts. Your video will be at the bottom of the page).
2. Check suggested equipment lists (below) prior to departing. Make sure everyone in your party is properly prepared, including the possibility of spending the night outdoors.
3. Before leaving, always tell a friend or relative where you are going, your route and when you plan to return. It is also advised that you can maintain contact with them via a Global Positioning System (GPS) device such as a Garmin or InReach. The following numbers are for reporting any problems or emergencies concerning the yurts:
 - Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation: 208.514.2403
 - Non-Motorized Trails Manager: 208.514.2419 or (cell) 208.781.0055
 - Yurt Coordinator: 208.514.2418 or (cell) 208.781.2296
4. Before departing, make sure your vehicle is in good condition. High clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicles are recommended.

DOGS

Dogs are allowed at all yurts with the exception of November 15th through April 15th, when dogs are not allowed at Banner Ridge or Elkhorn Yurts or on the groomed trails at the Banner Ridge Park N' Ski area. The trail system is reserved for Nordic skiers and snowshoers during that time. Please read our Pet Policy before you leave. [PET-POLICY.20.pdf \(idaho.gov\)](#)

SUMMER WATER SOURCE:

You must haul in your drinking water in the spring, summer and fall seasons. A wheelbarrow is provided at each yurt for convenience with hauling. 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 be conservative with this water so others have water for their stay. Each individual yurt guide describes more specifically the water supplies in their area, 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. However, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation reserves the right to have a motorized vehicle at a yurt site for administrative or maintenance reasons.

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.

Before your first yurt tour, we recommend:

- Print a copy of the yurt location map sent to you via email prior to your tour. These maps are also available on our web site: www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov. Everyone in your group should have a copy of this map.
- Go on a day trip to familiarize yourself with surrounding landmarks and learn route finding tricks that will help you locate the yurt again. If you have any doubt about your route-finding skills, do not go.
- Before attempting any yurt tour on your own, you should be experienced in the use of a map and compass or the Global Positioning System (GPS) and carry one 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.
- Use common sense and err on the safe side. Keep your party together. Turn back if the weather closes in or visibility becomes difficult. The yurt will be there for you to visit another day.
- Always be prepared. If for some reason you don't find the yurt, carry the equipment and clothing necessary to spend the night outdoors.

ON THE TRAIL

Whether hiking, biking, or horseback riding to the yurt, **keep your party together**. 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. 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. **Download a trail map**. This is extremely important in bad weather. Stay together and stay safe. 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.

CONDITION OF YURT UPON ARRIVAL

It is possible that a yurt can be damaged by extreme weather conditions, which are common in Idaho's mountains. High winds, falling branches from trees, severe weather or even bear curiosity could cause rips, tears and/or partial or total collapse. It is also possible that the yurt can be vandalized, or items stolen. These possibilities point out the need to be well prepared. In particular, be prepared to spend the night outdoors if necessary. **Please report any damage or problems to the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation: 208-514-2418 or 208-514-2419.**

ITEMS AT THE YURT

In each yurt, you should find 2 bunk beds with covered foam mattresses, a futon and mattress (which converts to a double bed), a table, chairs and kitchen cabinet, a two-burner propane stove, Solar panel and LED lights, a wood stove, a log rack, a tinder bucket, an ash bucket, assorted silverware, plates bowls, and cups, a plastic food storage container, assorted cooking pots and pans, miscellaneous kitchen equipment, a mop, a broom, a dust pan, a dome opener, and a fire extinguisher. Located outside: an axe, maul, hatchet 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.

STOVES

Each yurt has a wood stove, and a two-burner propane stove for cooking **You need to bring a one-pound bottle of propane for each night you plan to stay.** The standard screw-in propane disposable fuel bottle is used in the cooking stove. Carefully read the directions for the stove. 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.

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.

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 where temperature exceeds 120 degrees.

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 of the stove.

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. For a fast-burn rate, you will want the draft handle fully out.

In the evening, load the stove at least a half hour before bed to ensure a fire hot enough to allow you to lower the draft control low enough for an overnight burn. The ashes in the firebox tend to burn themselves up. When cool, please clean out ashes as necessary. Use the marked ash bucket and dump the ashes at least 200 feet from the yurt in an inconspicuous area. **DO NOT DUMP ASHES OVER THE SIDE OF THE DECK OR IN THE PIT TOILETS.** Please do not burn garbage or plastics in the stove, they leave a toxic, sticky residue in the chimney which can cause a chimney fire. Do not hang anything above the wood stove or place anything combustible within 36 inches of the stove (boots, clothing, plastic chairs, wood, or paper). If you are burning at continually low settings, the glass door is constantly blackened, this 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 the daily to-do task located on the wall of the yurt 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.

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 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. For sanitary reasons, always use the toilet for defecating.
- 5. **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 November 15th. Dogs are allowed at the Rocky Ridge yurt year-round.
- 6. Equestrians and other pack- stock should follow standard low-impact backcountry camping procedures to minimize damage to the site.
- 7. We ask that hunters using the yurt use common sense. Do not discharge any firearm within ¼ mile of the yurt.
- 8. Do not put mattresses on the floor.
- 9. Please do not chop wood on the stone hearth.
- 10. Please make a journal entry in the yurt logbook during your stay.

PROCEDURES WHEN YOU LEAVE:

1. Thoroughly sweep the yurt. Use the hand broom to sweep around the perimeter of the yurt wall, then the bigger broom to sweep the whole floor, especially under the beds. Be aware that 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 please carry out the empty ones. Anything left in the yurt has to be carried out by IDPR staff.
4. Empty water from the pots and coffee pot so they do not mildew.
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 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 dustpan).
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, causing leaks. A new dome is expensive.
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 trip should be done carefully. Carrying a Global Positioning System (GPS) is recommended at all times. Use common sense and care when you are doing activities such as chopping wood, starting a fire in the fire pit or wood stove, using the propane stove, 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. In the event of an emergency, 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 up the Stargaze trail.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT LIST (Please pass this information on to all members of the party)

An online equipment list is provided as a guide to help you prepare for a yurt trip.

Print your suggested equipment checklist for summer: [What-to-Pack-Summer-1.0.pdf \(idaho.gov\)](http://www.idaho.gov/What-to-Pack-Summer-1.0.pdf)

Remember:

Come prepared to spend the night outdoors.

If, for some reason, you do not make it to the yurt, or the yurt is damaged or collapsed.

Dressing in layers is the best choice.

As you get warm you can take off layers, and as you cool down during breaks you can put them back on.

Please photocopy this equipment list and pass on to all members of the party.