

Idaho City Area Yurts

Winter 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 yurt tour. After reading this material, make a careful and honest evaluation of your party's abilities. If you have any doubts of your ability to undertake a yurt tour, we recommend that you wait and go on a summer yurt tour before you try a winter tour. Be aware that backcountry travel by ski, snowshoe, or foot is 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.

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 208-514-2418 or 208-781-2296. A nonrefundable 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 DeEtta Petersen @ 208-514-2418 or 208-781-2296 (cell) or Tom Helmer @ 208-514-2419 or 208-866-6471 (cell)

- 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 9
- Maximum number of persons using a yurt site is 12 with prior approval. Call 208-514-2418 for permission

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](#) at this link.
2. Check equipment lists (suggested lists are included) 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 about where you are going, your route to the yurt, 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 208-781-2296
4. Check the weather forecast. Yurt tours are not recommended during winter storm warnings or strong winds. Call 511 for road conditions. Call the Idaho City Park N' Ski Area Snowline (514-2423) for snow conditions and grooming status. Or you can log on to www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov for more information. At the backcountry yurt portion of the website there is a link to snow depth reporting system, including snow depths at Mores Creek Summit and Jackson Peak Lookout. Also, there is a link to the 511 Road Information System.
5. Before departing, make sure your vehicle can withstand cold winter temperature as low as -30° Fahrenheit. Chains and a shovel are strongly recommended. **Remember, Park N' Ski permits are required November 15th to April 30th.** You can purchase them Online at <https://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov> , in Boise at the Headquarters of Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (208-334-4199) and at vendors that are listed on our website <https://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov> . You could be fined if you do not have a Park N' Ski Pass. Parking on Highway 21 is not allowed.

DOGS AND SNOWMOBILES

Dogs are allowed at all yurts for the exception of Dec 1st through April 15th, where dogs are not allowed at Banner Ridge or Elkhorn yurts or the groomed trails at the Banner Ridge Area Park N' Ski. The trail system is reserved for Nordic skiers and snowshoers during that time. Also, **It is illegal to operate a snowmobile on the Idaho City Nordic Ski Trail system. The Boise National Forest map outlines the area as no snowmobiling.** However, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation reserves the right to have a snowmobile at a yurt site for administrative or maintenance reasons.

ROUTES TO YURTS

A detailed description of yurt routes is found in each specific yurt guide. We recommend you take a yurt day trip prior to your reservation. There have been cases where an individual had been to a yurt on several occasions, yet was not able to locate it at a later date because of poor visibility from fog or blowing snow. It is for this reason that we strongly advise against undertaking yurt tours in extreme weather or poor visibility.

Routes to the yurts may not be marked well because of the difficulty of maintaining backcountry winter trails. Some sections of the trails go through large open areas where no features exist on which to attach markers. The yurts themselves are located on decks but, snow packs can exceed the height of the decks, leaving them hidden behind piles of snow and making it hard to see them from a distance. They are also located in trees, which help provide necessary wind protection but also increase the difficulty in locating them.

Before your first yurt tour, we recommend:

- Print a copy of the yurt location map from our web site: www.parksand recreation.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 of 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.

PARKING

Idaho Transportation Department employees become frustrated when they cannot completely clear a parking lot because someone parked improperly. In some cases they do not have the opportunity to come back to plow it for a week, leaving upset skiers. In order to help the snowplow operators efficiently clear the parking lots, we ask that overnight and weekday users park close together at the high end of the Banner Ridge lot, close to the highway. At the Gold Fork lot, park close together and parallel next to the toilet. At the Whoop-Um-Up lot park close together and parallel next to the toilet. Keep a shovel in your vehicle to dig it out in case it gets plowed or snowed in.

START EARLY

Travel to the yurts involves a significant rise in elevation from where you leave your vehicle. The elevation rise combined with the distance to the yurts and possible slow snow conditions (deep snow, breakable crust, heavy wet snow, etc.); can make your trip an all-day affair. It is highly recommended that you be on the trail no later than 10:00am. Daylight is short in the winter; sunset can be at 5:00pm. Once you arrive at the yurt, you may have to dig out the yurt and toilet.

ON THE TRAIL

Whether skiing or snowshoeing 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. This is extremely important in bad weather or poor visibility. 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 a time-tested safe way of traveling in the winter.

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, heavy snow storms, falling branches from trees, and accumulation of snow on the yurt walls 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.**

DIGGING OUT YURTS

It is important to keep the yurt decks clear of snow, especially to the yurt door. If snow is allowed to build up people may not be able to get into the yurt. We ask that everyone using the yurts pitch in and help keep them snow free. The snow shovels are normally hanging on the chimney support, under the deck or in the wood shed. Be extremely careful when using the shovel. The shovel can easily tear the outer covering of the yurt.

Do not climb on the chimney structure; it was not designed to handle a person's weight.

Important: At the completion of your stay, replace the snow shovels on their hooks. If you leave them in the yurt, the next party may not be able to dig out the yurt door.

ITEMS AT THE YURT

In each yurt, you should find 2 bunk beds with foam and cover, a futon and mattress and cover. It converts to a double bed, a table/chairs and kitchen cabinet, a two-burner propane stove, solar led lights, 2 propane lanterns, 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, an axe, a buck saw, a dome opener, floor towels, and a fire extinguisher. Located outside are: 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 AND LANTERNS

Each yurt is equipped with a solar panel and four (4) LED lights, a wood stove for heat, a two-burner propane stove for cooking and two (2) propane lanterns that use mantles as backup (mantles are provided). Carefully read the directions for the stove and lanterns on the yurt wall. You need to bring two, one-pound screw in bottles of propane for each night you plan to stay. These are used in the cooking stove and the lanterns.

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.

SAFETY

Everything you do on a backcountry tour should be done carefully. Conducting yourself safely while using yurts is equally important. Use common sense and care when using the wood stove, propane stove and lanterns, starting the fire, chopping wood, etc. There is no ski patrol in the yurt area and it's about three-hours to the nearest hospital. The closest telephone to the Idaho City Park N' Ski areas is in Lowman and the second closest is in Idaho City. Call the Boise County Sheriff at **1-208-392-4411** or in a medical emergency: **911**.

You and your party must come prepared. Backcountry travel in the winter requires a great personal responsibility from everyone to do all they can to be safe. There are many dangers, and the name of the game is to stay alert, constantly evaluate and minimize potential hazards. It would be a good idea to have someone on the trip with good knowledge of backcountry first aid.

There is cell phone coverage for Verizon phone systems at the high point on the Elkhorn trail once you're on top of the Banner Ridge. There is also coverage on the Stargaze trail near Beaver Creek Summit on Highway 21.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT LIST

The equipment list on the next page is included as a guide to help you prepare for a yurt trip. 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. The term "synthetics" on the below clothing list refers to materials such as pile, polar fleece, synthetic clothing, Lycra, or polypropylene. Because you will likely sweat carrying a heavy pack to the yurt, we highly recommend synthetics next to the skin that wick moisture away. Synthetic/polypropylene undergarments will wick away sweat keeping you feeling dry and warm. Cotton socks, tee shirts, underwear and blue jeans should not be worn because they hold moisture against your skin hastening hypothermia. Feel free to photocopy this equipment list and pass on to all members of the party.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT LIST

- Park N' Ski permit for each vehicle
 - Idaho City Area yurt specific directions (trail map and guide)
 - yurt door lock combination
 - 2 screw-in type small propane canisters for each day
 - paper towels (1 roll per day)
 - sleeping bag
 - pillow - inflatable saves space
 - backpack (preferably internal frame)
 - sunglasses
 - pair of off-trail Nordic skis or snowshoes
 - set of ski poles
 - set of waxes for skis and scraper
 - pair of Nordic ski boots or insulated pack boots
 - headlamp or small flashlight
 - matches in a waterproof container
 - lighter and fire starter
 - high energy trail snacks
 - emergency whistle
 - large water bottle
 - compass
 - small knife
 - toothbrush and paste
 - synthetic long underwear (top and bottom)
 - underwear/briefs
 - wool blend socks
 - gloves
 - pair of wool or polar fleece mittens with waterproof shell
 - polar fleece or down jacket
 - synthetic or wool long-sleeve shirt
 - wool, polar fleece or synthetic long pants
 - polar fleece, synthetic or wool hat
 - breathable windproof/waterproof shell jacket and hood
 - breathable windproof/waterproof shell ski pants
 - pair of knee-high gaiters
 - pair of slippers or down booties
 - personal medications
 - watch
 - avalanche shovel to dig emergency shelter
 - roll of toilet paper
 - sun screen lotion and sun screen lip block
 - plastic tarp to serve as an emergency shelter
- FIRST AID KIT** that includes:
- first aid book
 - moleskin
 - 2" first-aid tape
 - assorted band aids including butterfly
 - gauze rolls
 - chemical heat pack
 - ace bandage
 - triangular bandages and sterile pads
 - anti-acid tablets
 - strong pain medication
 - Ibuprofen tablets
 - antiseptic wound cleaner
 - body thermometer
 - latex gloves
 - tweezers/scissors/nail clipper
 - small mirror
- EMERGENCY AND REPAIR KIT** that includes:
- small roll of duct or strapping tape
 - extra ski pole basket
 - multi tool or Swiss knife for repairing ski bindings
 - extra screw for ski binding
 - heavy duty sewing kit with awl
 - stick-on nylon patches
 - nylon cord/braided wire
 - safety pins
 - matches in waterproof container or lighter and fire starter
 - extra set of flashlight batteries and bulb
 - OPTIONAL:**
 - snow sled to haul equipment
 - avalanche transceiver if telemarking or snow boarding
 - climbing skins are very useful on steep sections of trails
 - camera