



The Olympic Wilderness

Royal Basin Wilderness Destination

Official web site: www.nps.gov/olym

Olympic National Park is one of the wildest places left in the contiguous United States. In 1988, Congress designated 95% of Olympic as wilderness to further protect the wild areas of the park from development. Each year, nearly 40,000 people camp in the Olympic Wilderness. Because of the large number of people, we should each take time to consider the effect our actions have on wildlife, plants, other visitors, and the overall wildness of Olympic National Park.

Royal Basin was carved by glaciers at the head of Royal Creek in the Dungeness watershed. Mt. Deception, the second tallest mountain in the park, located at the head of the basin, was named by early explorers for the confusion climbers tended to experience while making their way up. Today Royal Basin It is renown for its spectacular old growth forests, wildflower meadows and craggy peaks. The heavy use of and damage to this fragile area prompted the park to complete a large revegetation project in 2001 and 2002.

Important Information

Permits: A Wilderness Camping Permit is required for all overnight stays in the backcountry. Because of its popularity and fragile nature, permits for Royal Basin must be obtained through the Wilderness Information Center (WIC) in person or by calling (360) 565-3100. Permits are limited between May 1 and September 30. Reservations may be made no more than 30 days in advance by calling the WIC.

Wildlife: In the Royal Basin/Royal Lake area, all food, garbage and scented items must be stored in "Bear Canisters". The trees in this area are not generally large enough for food-hanging. If you do not secure your food, you may endanger yourself, your gear, other campers, bears, and other wildlife. Bear canisters are available for loan at the WIC, Wild Birds Unlimited (in Gardiner on Highway 101, east of Sequim) and many outdoor retail stores in the Puget Sound area. Contact the WIC for a list of locations.

Fires: Subalpine forests and meadows require dead and decaying wood for nutrients. Camp fires are prohibited above 3,500 feet to protect fragile plants and soils.

Toilets: Use the composting toilet at Royal Lake. Do not urinate in the toilet, as this inhibits proper composting. Urinate on rocks or bare ground.

Safety: Mt. Deception, The Needles, and surrounding peaks are not "walk ups." These routes can be very hazardous due to steep snow slopes, falling rocks, and avalanche danger. Check with the WIC or the Royal Basin ranger for specifics on conditions and suggested gear and skills.

Other Regulations: Pets, weapons, and wheeled vehicles/devices are prohibited on National Park trails and in the park wilderness/backcountry. Stock is prohibited because trails are unsuitable for stock.

Camping

Please review your permit carefully. Camp only in your designated location.

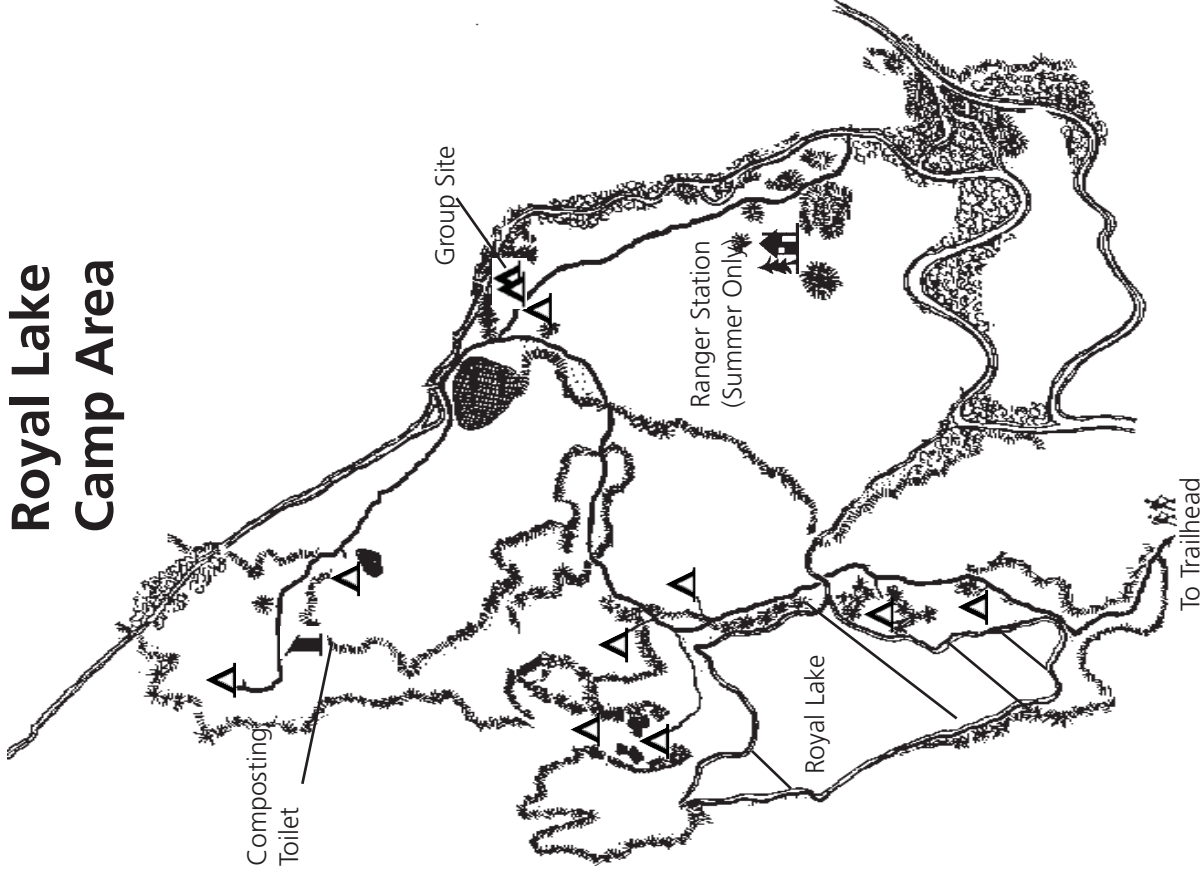
Royal Creek Sites: There are 3 primary campsites located along Royal Creek. The first 2 campsites are located approximately half way along the trail's length, at 3500 ft. These have are along the creek and allow fires. The third site is approximately 3/4 mile farther up trail and does not allow fires.

Lower Meadow: The lower meadow is located approximately 1/2 mile below Royal Lake and is clearly marked. Please be careful to camp only on bare, hardened ground. There are rare plants in this meadow. Please stay on trails.

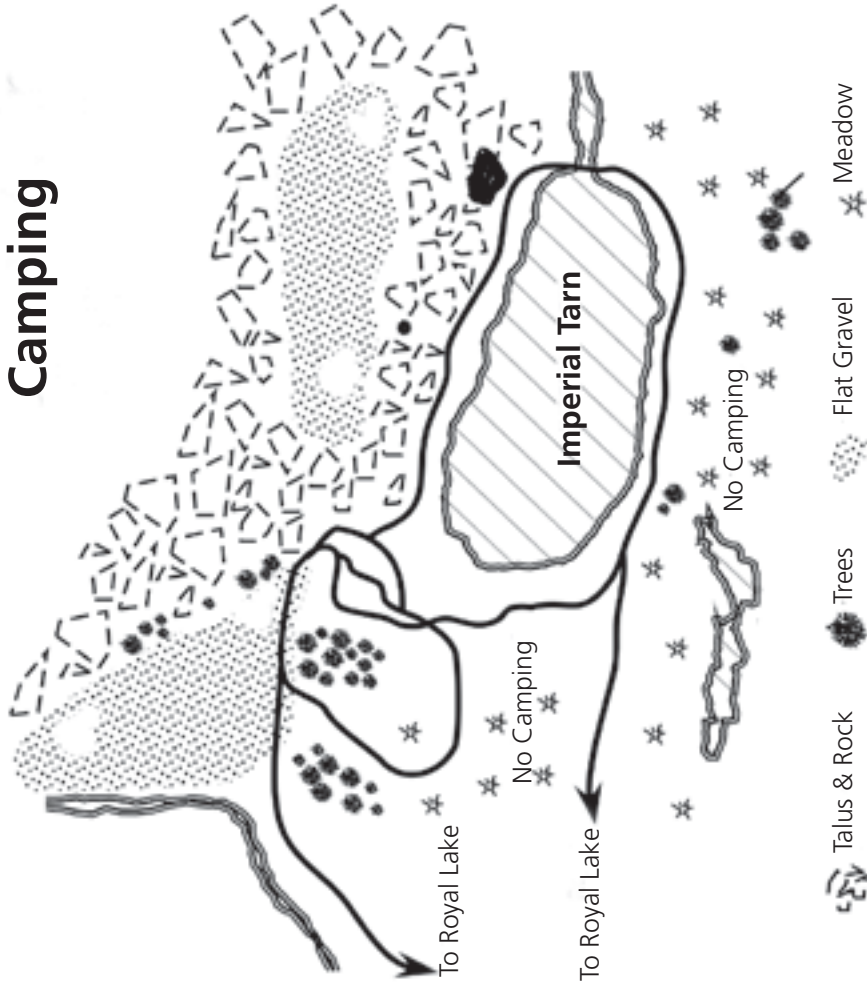
Royal Lake Campsites: There are 10 campsites are Royal Lake. Only 2 sites can accommodate 2 or more tents. If you have 3 or more tents, we strongly recommend obtaining 2 separate permits and 2 campsites. The group site, clearly labeled "Group Site," is for groups of over 6 people only and must be reserved separately in advance. Stay on trails and within the camping areas. Avoid areas with "Closed" signs.

Upper Basin: The upper basin is located 3/4 mile and 1,000 ft. above Royal Lake along an unmaintained trail. Although the trail is generally easy to follow, it can be obscured by snow in the early season. There are no designated campsites in the Upper Basin. Please camp only on bare ground or gravel. Camping and walking on vegetation will destroy it. Do not camp near the small tarn/lake.

Royal Lake Camp Area



Upper Basin Camping



The Olympic Marmot

The Olympic Marmot, common in Royal Basin, is unique to the Olympic Peninsula - found no where else in the world. While mountain meadows can seem warm and cozy in July and August, winters are harsh with deep snow and high winds. The Olympic Marmot hibernates in burrows deep beneath the snow for up to eight months of the year. During the brief summer they bear young and feed on a rich variety of mountain plants. A marmot may double its weight in just three months. In summer, two year old marmots leave their family groups often traveling several miles before finding suitable habitat and a mate. Adult Olympic Marmots weigh 8 to 20 pounds and may live up to ten years. They are the largest member of the squirrel family.