



MassParks Program Guidance

Camping Program

Date: May 9, 2013

Subject: Touring Cyclists and Backpackers

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation will accommodate "self contained" touring cyclists and backpackers who arrive at DCR campgrounds without a reservation even when the campground is full.

Background

Most bicycle tourists plan their trip in advance and make camping reservations ahead of time to accommodate their stay. All bicycle tour organizations plan ahead and make reservations when planning a tour. Nonetheless, there are times when mechanical issues or weather impedes a touring cyclist or hiker's schedule and they must seek alternative camping accommodations at the last minute. Whereas, the touring cyclist may not have the capacity to find alternate accommodations, MassParks campgrounds will accommodate these stranded cyclists or backpackers as outlined in the procedure below.

MassParks procedure for touring cyclists and backpackers:

When our campgrounds have available sites, MassParks campgrounds welcome cycling tourists or backpackers with or without reservations.

When our campgrounds are **full**, in the interest of public safety, MassParks campgrounds will accommodate "self-contained" * cyclists or backpackers in an area that provides the cyclist or backpacker "reasonable accommodation" for their needs.

- The area need not be a designated campsite but should provide reasonable space, privacy and access to normal campground amenities (toilet facilities, showers, etc) provided to other tent campers.
- MassParks shall not routinely block reservations or hold a site or sites for such emergency accommodations.

- Applicable fees shall apply.
- The camping accommodation shall be provided for one night only unless extenuating circumstances require otherwise.
- Campgrounds may limit this accommodation to groups of four or fewer if public safety is not a significant concern and a larger group would have a negative impact on the camping environment.

"Self-contained" means that the individual is travelling with all of their gear, (tent, clothing, sleeping equipment, etc.) on their bicycle, in a bicycle trailer or in their backpack.

"Supported" tours, where camping gear is carried by a van or other motorized vehicle, have the alternative to transport their riders to an alternate location. Therefore, the public safety concerns are diminished. MassParks is not required to accommodate supported bicycle tourists or backpackers when our campgrounds are at capacity.

This guidance establishes a framework for decision-making at the field level. It is rare that a touring cyclist or backpacker arrives at an already full campground without a reservation and no alternative camping option. And, the circumstances of each incident will vary with the weather, time of day, number and age of travelers seeking accommodation and other factors that have aligned to produce the situation. MassParks is confident in its field managers to consider these unique factors in the context of public health and safety concerns for the travelers and other campers, the overall campground environment, and MassParks' spirit of hospitality and support for healthy transportation in Massachusetts.

This accommodation is not a substitute for good trip planning. Cyclists or backpackers planning to visit one of MassParks' popular campgrounds by foot, bicycle or car can get the best choice of campsites and services by reserving their site through our reservations service provider ReserveAmerica at www.reserveamerica.com or by calling Reserveamerica at 866 422 6762.