

Why Do Only 1 in 4 RVers Boondock?

By Bob Difley
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We boondockers find camping outside of campgrounds as normal and comfortable as the rest of our RV lifestyle. When we need to start looking for a campsite for the night, we start looking for side roads leading off into who-knows-where more often than we pull out a campground guide.

We plan our trip routes through national forests, along two-lane roads, over scenic byways, and across BLM land rather than head for popular areas along Interstate highways known to have lots of campgrounds and RV resorts.

In fact, less than 1 in 4 RVers boondock, preferring to stay in organized campgrounds. I'm not sure of the reason, but I would guess that it is for convenience. Why else would

RVers prefer to pay their hard-earned money for an organized campground rather than stay at a free or cheap campsite? Or be shoehorned in with other campers when you could have lots of space and privacy instead? And why prefer a campground with the constant din of other campers, running vehicles, screaming kids, barking dogs, and late night 20-something partiers around a campfire--when you could have peace and quiet and solitude and a view of Mother Nature?

One other reason, I suppose, is that most RVers are sociable types and like meeting other campers and being part of a campout community. And the amenities, like access to a swimming lake with a lifeguard to watch the kids, park campfire programs with entertaining Ranger talks, RV resorts with Wi-fi, cable TV, heated swimming pools, hot tubs, recreation rooms with programs, games, TV, and potlucks, proximity to cities, restaurants, golf courses, shopping--oh, and electric, sewer, and water hookups.

Staying in campgrounds is much more convenient, also, and they are easier to find than boondocking spots. You can locate them in campground guides and online, along main roads and highways, with signs for easy access in and out, have hook-ups so you don't have to monitor your state of battery charge and your water and waste tanks, and you don't have to drive down a dirt road and get your rig dusty.

These conveniences and amenities must be more important to most RVers than the physical open space, private campsites with few if any neighbors nearby, scenic settings with long views, star-filled skies not dimmed by campground lights, access to hiking trails and wild areas, the sound of rustling leaves or a babbling brook instead of vehicles, kids, and dogs, and little or no cost that boondockers value.

Or is boondocking in the wilds--not including dry-camping at a Walmart--just too much of an unknown, alien to most RVers normal way of camping, or does camping out in a natural environment not appeal to them? Not that I would like all RVers to suddenly discover boondocking and I find all my favorite places occupied.

Why do you boondock--or not boondock?