

# HOW TO: Have a Low Impact Campfire

IN GRAND  
STAIRCASE  
ESCALANTE  
NATIONAL  
MONUMENT

## The Impact of Campfires

Many people like to have a campfire when staying overnight in Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. While the warmth and aesthetic from a fire can be a nice addition to a trip, campfires can be fairly damaging to the landscape through the scorching of topsoil and vegetation, ash creation, and demand for wood where it is often not abundant.

There are also several places within the Monument that campfires are not allowed. No open fires are allowed in any of the canyons within Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument and in all of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

You should always check if there are any seasonal fire regulations or bans in effect as well before your trip. You can view all fire restrictions at <https://utahfireinfo.gov/fire-restrictions/>.



[www.gsehm.org](http://www.gsehm.org)



## Is My Campfire Low Impact?

It is best to not have a campfire in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument if you can avoid it, but if you do decide to have one in an area that is allowed, there are a few steps you can take to make it as low impact as possible.

- If you have to collect firewood, only collect pieces that are smaller than an adult wrist and are dead and scattered on the ground. Burning wood this size ensures that the wood burns down to ash.
- Bring your own campfire wood or purchase it from a town near the Monument. Do your best to not collect firewood in the Monument.
- Consider camping at a campground with established fire rings, like those available at Calf Creek Falls Campground, Deer Creek Campground, commercial campgrounds within one of the towns that surround the Monument, or in one of the many campgrounds on the Dixie National Forest.
- It is best to not have a campfire if you can avoid it! This is the lowest impact option.

• Do not break off branches from trees that are dead or alive. Large dead junipers play an important role in ecosystem structure and the desert aesthetic, but they are starting to disappear due to firewood collection. In the backcountry, collect wood throughout the day so that you do not deplete the wood around your campsite.

DO NOT  
MAKE A FIRE  
IN AN ALCOVE

COLLECT SMALL WOOD

DO NOT  
COLLECT  
BIG WOOD

BRING MY OWN WOOD

AVOID  
BUILDING A FIRE RING

CAMP IN THE  
CAMPGROUND

ENJOY A FIRELESS NIGHT

• Yikes! Never build fires in alcoves or near rock walls (even if existing rings exist).

• Use existing fire rings and avoid building new ones. If you must build a fire ring do so in a dry, sandy wash. Make sure to scatter the cold ashes in the wash or pack them out. When it rains, the ashes will be spread throughout the system.

\* An alternative to a fire ring is a fire pan, which is a metal pan designed to hold a campfire. You can purchase fire pans from outdoor gear stores or online. Always set fire pans on sand or bedrock, away from vegetation. Pack out cold ashes or scatter them away from your campsite - make sure they are cold so they do not cause a wildfire.