

File Code: 2300

Date: April 4, 2026

Dear Outfitter and Guide Special Use Permit Holders,

Beginning May 1, 2026, all overnight hikers and campers in the Pemigewasset Wilderness will be required to store all food, food containers, scented items (such as soap, lip balm, toothpaste) and refuse in a cylindrical, hard sided, nonpliable IGBC (International Grizzly Bear Committee) certified bear resistant canister.

The Pemigewasset Wilderness has experienced increased human-bear conflicts over the past five years driven by a healthy bear population, a surge in visitor use, and ineffective food storage. These conflicts pose significant risks to public safety, lead to bear habituation, result in negative ecological effects for the black bear population and degrade Wilderness character. Alternative food storage techniques have proven to be ineffective in the Pemigewasset Wilderness Area as incidents show an increasing trend between 2021 and 2025.

Effective May 1, 2026, alternative methods for storing food and bear attractants in the Pemigewasset Wilderness will no longer be permitted as they have proven to be less effective than canisters. The only exceptions are the bear resistant food boxes located at the Thirteen Falls Tent Site.

IGBC certified bear resistant food canisters are available for rent free of charge at the White Mountain National Forest Visitor Centers in Lincoln, Campton, Conway and Gorham, New Hampshire. Failure to comply with the food storage requirement could result in fines and or permit revocation.

The Forest Service remains committed to providing safe, enjoyable backcountry experiences while protecting bears that live in the Pemigewasset Wilderness. Proper food storage is one of the most effective tools for preventing conflicts. Visitor cooperation plays a crucial role in keeping wildlife wild and ensuring we can provide safe and reliable access to outdoor experiences.

Please visit the White Mountain National Forest website for more information on this and all public alerts under the website's 'Alerts' section.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

4/6/2026

X Brooke M. Brown

Signed by: Department of Agriculture

BROOKE M BROWN
DISTRICT RANGER

