

## Transcript "log" for Room "Scheduled\_Chat"

JeanieH joined.  
JeanieH left.  
Howard joined.  
Jack\_Mayer joined.  
Denyse joined.  
Jenny\_J joined.  
speedhitch joined.  
Rick joined.  
Darrell joined.  
emeacham joined.  
Perry joined.  
soontotravel joined.  
Howard Gonna be tough keepin' this organized! :)  
Glenn joined.  
Lee joined.  
Darrell Good Luck, H  
BillC joined.  
emeacham We'll behave, Howard  
Lee Is this the place?  
Darrell Somehow you'll pull it off  
Donna162 joined.  
Sonia joined.  
Howard It is Lee  
BillC Good evening everyone  
Howard We'll wait a few minutes and go over some ground rules to try to make this work.  
Jenny\_J okay  
speedhitch OK  
Sonia RULES! hmph!  
BillC ok  
soontotravel ok  
Darrell all ears, or should i say eyes  
Spatch joined.  
Ken\_and\_Sarah joined.

Ken\_and\_Sarah Good evening all.

Darrell Hi KandS

Howard Great to see a good crowd!

Howard Welcome everyone from everyone! That should save some time and space. :)

Darrell :)

Howard My clock says it's time, so here we go.

Howard Everyone is here to learn something. And most folks will have similar questions.

Howard So let's start with one person asking a question and we'll see if we can get that one answered before moving to the next one.

Howard Who wants to start?

Ken\_and\_Sarah What are your main sources of info?

Howard These questions will be directed toward everyone and not just me. So I'll answer and all else chime in as well.

Howard K & S,  
alfie joined.

Howard Our main source is the internet. State Park websites. National Park websites. Recreation.gov is the reservation system for federal campgrounds.

Sonia I check my Woodalls book, the Passport America site and then read reviews on RV park reviews (is that what it's called?) If I'm just passing through an area, I just check my Woodalls to find a nearby Perry left.

Howard ReserveAmerica is the same system as Recreation.gov but recently they have split federal reservations off to recreation.gov

Lee I look at Howard's campground reviews.

Howard Many states use reserveamerica as do some state park systems

Lee Woodall's and Trailer Life also.  
jrhaman joined.

Sonia If I'm just passing through a place, I check the Woodalls directory and also Passport America directory.

emeacham We use all of the ones mentioned, plus ask people we meet for good campgrounds

speedhitch We read the blogs and this forum for our ideas

Sonia Yes, the best places have been those recommended by people I meet.

jrhaman hi Linda

Sonia I had a horrible time finding campgrounds in Oregon and Washington this summer....so bad it spoiled my trip to those states.

Howard www.forestcamping.com also has information on National Forest campgrounds. They will have fewer hook-ups and smaller sites in a lot of cases, but beautiful settings.

Sonia The state parks were not only jammed full even during the week, but also they are all densely wooded...no satellite signal and I'm a TV addict.

emeacham Woodalls is probably my least favorite source

Jenny\_J Lots of great campgrounds in Washington and Oregon

Lee Join the Elks. When we pull into a new town we park at the Elks, unhook the toad, then tour different RV parks before we commit.

alfie I really prefer the COE parks

emeacham Good Idea, Lee

jrhaman left.

Howard RVParkReviews.com is a good source for looking at ratings in particular areas. But there are such varied opinions, that it is hard to get consistency.

jrhaman joined.

Jenny\_J free campgrounds.com works also some have hookups some dont

Howard It will tell you if a place is blatantly bad, though.

Howard The system of choosing campgrounds depends a lot on individual preferences.

BillC I've only been rv'ing since Jan, but have followed Howard and Linda since they sold their home. I have a lot of trouble choosing a park. Most publications I have purchased are prejudiced. I have the

Sonia Howard, I drive through state parks and frequently they are wooded. I am so surprised that you've been in wooded areas and still get a satellite signal.

Howard We like public campgrounds so we gravitate toward the online sites that have maps showing campground locations in the general area we will be traveling.

speedhitch When more people start listing campgrounds on the forum we will have a good base for planning trips

speedhitch Howard has made a good start with his

Howard Sonia, it just takes a little while. Out of 82 stops in two plus years, we have not had satellite internet only 3 times.

floridariz joined.

Sonia Howard, so you drive in and see lots of trees, and you go ahead and

pay and take a site?

Denyse a good way to check areas for trees is use google earth. also the new www.campsvie.com is helpful. It's new and will continue to grow  
Donna162 left.

Jack\_Mayer One thing about H's method - it does require a reliable Internet connection  
2\_4\_d\_hwy joined.

Howard Sonia, we usually park at the gate. Before the Jeep we walked in with a compass and checked sites for a window.

Howard We've been lucky to find at least a few sites with southern sky access.

Howard Jack brings up a good point. When you don't have internet connection, what do you do?

Sonia Well, I'm surprised that works. The "gate" is always a LOOONG walk from the campground and there is nowhere near gates to park. But, OK, I understand.

Howard What do you look for in the Woodalls, Trailer Life, etc.

Lee Pull out your books. Woodalls and Trailer Life

Jack\_Mayer I look for size, first

Lee Ratings

Jack\_Mayer Then wifi

Jenny\_J particular reason jack??

emeacham Ratings in TL, pets, location, size

Jack\_Mayer I find the ratings do not help me for the most part. Most of the ratings rate things I do not care about

Lee Ratings are not indicative of price either.  
Larry joined.

speedhitch We like to know if we can get our long rig in to begin with

Sonia I look at the average site width. But I nearly always stay at private RV parks because in my experience state parks are too densely wooded.

Darrell Ratings generally do not reflect what we are looking for

Jack\_Mayer I do not want to be in a park that only has 45' sites, because it will be too crowded

BillC I like size, wifi, cable a plus, no permanent residents and not many park units.

jrhaman rvparkreviews.com gives actual camper reviews so you can see what other people like or disliked about a particular place

Sonia Jack, I assure you mean length?

Sonia I meant to say, "assume"

Jack\_Mayer he only thing for sure on a rating is that a 10/10/10 park will be pretty nice...

Jack\_Mayer Yes, Sonia

Sonia But the sites might still be close together

Darrell and generally a 10/10/10 park will be expensive

Lee Everyone has their own likes and dislikes. You learn what to look for (for yourself) through experience.

Jack\_Mayer Yup, and I can live with that for a short time. Actually we do not find that to be true often.

alfie left.

emeacham I still like to talk to someone that's stayed at a place I'm considering

Jack\_Mayer We usually book for a day or 2 in an area then look around

Jack\_Mayer Find the place we prefer

emeacham Good idea, Jack, we need to learn to do that

Lee When we pull into a new town we park at the Elks, unhook the toad, then tour different RV parks before we commit.

speedhitch I am with you emie

Howard I spend hours researching campgrounds. To us, it's such an important decision.

Lee We learned the hard way not to make reservations at a park we have not seen.

Jack\_Mayer I NEVER commit to more than a few days at first.

Sonia Well, I've been on the road over 2 yrs and I find finding a campground difficult and unpleasant. I don't make reservations because I may hate the place and most won't give a refund.

Jenny\_J some Eagle Lodges having camping hookups also

billiew joined.

Jack\_Mayer Sonia, we RARELY make reservations

Jack\_Mayer But I do not do State parks as much as H. I guess there, you have to make reservations

Howard Us too on the reservation thing. Rarely make them.

Lee Another option we have used is to park at Walmart, unhook the toad, and look around.

Larry left.

Sonia But in Oregon this summer, it was impossible without reservations. I was able to stay at places at most 3 days and had to move on because they were filled.

Sonia I used that time to search for another park, and there never were any.

Howard Rules are different state to state in state parks.

Sonia Moral of the story: don't go to Oregon coast in the summer

Howard Many states keep a percentage of their sites "non-reservable" for walk-ins.

Howard Once on a non-reservable site, you can't get kicked out until you reach their camping limit.

Sonia Lee, you must drive a motorhome. I don't think I want to unhitch a trailer at WMart and leave it unattended  
billiew left.

Lee Howard makes a good point. You have to know that when you look at the Reserve America web site. It looks like they are full but they aren't.

Jack\_Mayer What is the difference, Sonia?

Lee Correct.

Jack\_Mayer I would lock it...

BillC I'm afraid if I don't have a reservation, the site will not be large enough.

Jack\_Mayer Bill, I have not found that to be a problem

Sonia But Howard, when you are on the road, you have already made note of possible next stops? And do you have several alternates in your notes in case the one is bad?

Jack\_Mayer As long as I pick a Park that has big enough sites in the book  
Dee joined.  
jrhaman left.

Sonia Jack, a motorhome without a toad doesn't appear abandoned, but a trailer without a truck in front clearly is

Howard We don't leave a campground until we have a solid selection for the next one. Though we don't make reservations, I almost always call ahead and talk to the campground manager or hosts.

Howard The reservation people don't know squat about the campgrounds, but the people that work there will give you more insight. We try to have a plan B just in case, though.

speedhitch It is still better if you find out first hand from someone that has been there.

Sonia Howard, how do you know how far you are willing to travel that day?

Sonia I really find this hunt for a place to stay to be a MAJOR PIA. Anyone else find it a nuisance?

Howard Sometimes we travel less than 100 miles. We try to travel somewhere between 100 and 200. But we always plan to arrive at a campground by around 3:00 so we have time for plan B.  
RVDude joined.

Jack\_Mayer Same with us. We always arrive in the early to mid afternoon  
emeacham Sonia, to us, it's part of the adventure of fulltiming  
Howard Sonia, like I said, I spend hours doing it.  
emeacham If we don't like a place we can always move  
Jack\_Mayer We actually start a little earlier than H&L  
soontotravel left.

Jenny\_J i believe starting earlier would be better - i prefer to drive early in the day  
tylersamma joined.

Denyse in the west can you just park wherever? or do you have to be in a park.

Jack\_Mayer I do try to avoid rush hour if we are near people  
Glenn left.

Sonia I notice that Howard will drive 20 or more miles off his path for a park. If I'm in transit, I won't go off my road more than about 5 miles.

Sonia Jack: always avoid people

Jack\_Mayer D, no not anywhere, but there ARE more boondocking places  
soontotravel joined.  
Pa joined.

Howard Ken, I hope you are writing fast. :)  
Darrell left.  
goldpaws joined.

Sonia I'm not set up to boondock, but finding those places is difficult too.  
Someone has to tell you where they are

Ken\_and\_Sarah I am enjoying the comments and taking notes.

Jack\_Mayer Yes, it is sometimes hard to find them. We use the internet, and also scout ourselves

Lee I, like Howard, spend hours researching RV parks. I do not like to do this. There have been times I told my wife that she would have to do the research. After 15 months of fulltiming we have found w  
forest service maps would help

Jenny\_J  
Sonia It's like find the 4th rock and turn there and then look for the 8th tree  
Since we aren't fulltiming yet I am curious how many of you use

discount programs and do you save enough to cover the cost of the program.

Rick Do the others of you have websites with camp reviews as H & L do?

Howard I forgot to mention that posts are limited to 200 characters. You get truncated if you go longer, but you can't see where you got cut off. Everyone else can. :)

emeacham K&S, we have Passport America and it has paid for itself over and over

Jack\_Mayer I use Passport America a lot. It is well worth it.

Lee I just realized that.

Sonia Passport America is definitely worth it if you will stay at private RV parks. If you are like Howard and avoid them, then it wouldn't be worthwhile

Lee Where did I get truncated?

2\_4\_d\_hwy How many of you use a gazetteer for the state you are in for finding those out of the way places

Pa We use Passport America, it pays for itself after a couple of stays

emeacham Rick I'm just starting my blog, and I am posting comments about where we stay

Ken\_and\_Sarah You indicate the Elks have camping. Are there any other fraternal organizations that have them also?

Howard Even we have paid for our Passport America membership - well worth it.

RVDude Lee... the last line was "After 15 months of fulltiming we have found w"

Rick Where E?

Lee After 15 months of fulltiming we have found we stress over it more than we should. It really isn't that difficult.

tylersamma We have used Passport america for the past week, and saved double its cost. Right now, no PPA parks in the area.

Jenny\_J K & S The Eagles do

Ken\_and\_Sarah Does anyone know if the VFW or the American Legion has them?

Howard I don't think there is a reason to have Passport America, Happy Camper, and CampClub USA. All have basically the same parks and discounts. One membership should suffice.

Spatch left.

Pa You are correct Howard, they pretty much use the same campgrounds

Lee Even if the Elks lodge in the town you are visiting doesn't have camping they do allow you to park in they parking lot while you tour

the local RV parks. It is a safe place to leave your rig while y

emeacham We use them primarily if we are on the move for a long distance

Jack\_Mayer Same with us, Ellie

Lee Ooops, did it again..... It is a safe place to leave your rig while you explore.

Jenny\_J I agree howard

soontotravel With PA , you don't get the discount, is that correct?

Sonia It's harder to figure out if a state park will be nice. The websites don't typically have many photos, which I do not understand.

Spatch joined.

emeacham Soon, each participating PA park has their own rules about when they honor the discount

2\_4\_d\_hwy Aren't there restrictions with Passport America such as number of days or week?

soontotravel I ment on week-ends.

Jenny\_J 24d sometimes and sometimes not

Jack\_Mayer Yes, there are restrictions, but they are documented in the book

Howard Sonia, it is really difficult. We rely on site size if the website gives it, rvparkreviews.com which also has reviews of public campgrounds, and very importantly, talking to someone at the campground.

BillC left.

Glenn joined.

Sonia The park reviews people never say there a zillion trees and your cell phone won't work.

Howard Correct on Passport America. Most campgrounds have restrictions on the discount. But it is documented in the Notes on the listing. Gotta read those things carefully.

Sonia I'm parked for a couple of months, and I am much happier because I don't have to look for a campground, but the scenery is getting boring.

Howard Sonia, that's why you call someone physically at the campground and ask those questions. :)

Lee We don't use PA or GoodSam etc. just because we usually stay longer than a couple of nights. If you get the weekly rate no other discounts apply.

tylersamma PA rules seem to be more lenient in the offseason (now).

Howard Right. The discount clubs allow campgrounds to get people into their campground in off-season, off peak days, etc. But some places honor the discount all the time.

Sonia OK, Howard, I guess I will take your que & make phone calls. I admit I never make phone calls except when I'm driving & need to know if they have empty spotsw

Jack\_Mayer I've foundthat sometimes you can negotiate some more time at PA rates. But not always  
floridariz left.

Lee Jack, I have not been successful at that.

Sonia Summer was terrible finding campgrounds. I was so happy when Labor Day came

Howard And as Lee said, all discounts are based on nightly rates. Sometimes weekly or monthly rates give you a better deal.

Jack\_Mayer Generally when pretty empty is the best time for that

Jack\_Mayer H, that is why PA is good for travelling point-point. You are not staying long

2\_4\_d\_hwy Good Point Jack.

emeacham Sonia you make a good point about finding places in summer, especially in very popular locations

speedhitch Does PA have a Web Site

Rick How often do you find the sites are just too close together. I know you all are really social...but....

Jack\_Mayer Of course, H does not do many long runs in limited time :)

Lee We WallMart (or Target, like just the other night) for point to point.

Jenny\_J better to make reservations ahead

Jenny\_J but i dont like to pay reservation fees  
Darrell joined.

emeacham Yes, Speed they do have a web site  
Darrell left.

Jack\_Mayer Lee, I do not use WM because we stop at 2-3 pm I'm not interested in a parking lot for that long

Sonia WalMart is scary. All alone in the middle of nowhere...don't like it..only do it when there are no other places.

speedhitch Walmart is too expensive

emeacham <http://www.passportamerica.com/>

tylersamma Just found rvparkreviews.com yesterday. Great sight to visit when finding the next stop.

Lee We stop before dark, do a little shopping, watch TV, and turn in early. I get up early while the wife is still in bed and we hit the road.  
Yes, getting a spot in public campgrounds during the summer will

always be tough. Better to go to popular places in shoulder season unless you like to plan for reservations way in advance.

speedhitch Thanks

Lee Maybe that is easier to do in a motorhome than in a fiver

Howard Same goes for public campgrounds in the south in winter.

Mikey joined.

Howard But we still find we can get a few days in at even popular spots during peak season if we are flexible and arrive early to mid-week.

Sonia Yea, H, just wait until you do the Columbia River Gorge and coast of Oregon.

emeacham Right, Howard, we try to arrive Tues or Wed.

Denyse If you arrive in mid week don't you have to leave by Fri for the weekenders?

Glenn left.

emeacham Not if you get a nonreservable site, Denyse

Howard Denyse, depends on whether they have non-reservable sites. If all sites are reservable, then probably. But three days is better than nothing. :)

2\_4\_d\_hwy Many times the non-reservable sites are nicer.

Sonia When I was coming down to Texas, I so looked forward to one of my fav.state parks, Lake Murray in OK, got there on a Wed.

Howard Sometimes we have had to move spots to allow for reserved sites - no big deal.

Sonia All their campgrounds were full and that was middle October

Mikey The campground we are going to Thanksgiving only reserves half their spots

speedhitch Sonia you say tha Lake Murray is nice

Sonia I love that place. I have a kayak, so the lake is great.

speedhitch Writing it down now

Howard Ellie, you have any specific questions on finding campgrounds or RV parks?

Ken\_and\_Sarah left.

tylersamma Speaking of Thanksgiving. We don't know where we will be, so do we need to make reservations somewhere now? It will be somewhere in shouthern California.

Lee While on the subject of changing sites, make sure you mention that you do not mind changing sites when making reservations. The park personal never think about this and it can allow you to stay in th

emeacham No, I feel good about what we've discussed tonight

Lee The park personal never think about this and it can allow you to stay in the same campground longer.

Sonia They have a full hookup campground, Elephant something, and others that have just W&E, but all right on the lake  
Dee left.  
Ken\_and\_Sarah joined.

Jack\_Mayer We do make reservations for major holidays if on the move. About the only time we do.  
Dee joined.

Mikey Tyler , I am in Alabama, and its always a good idea, the park we are going to only had 2 sites left for reservation  
Bama joined.

speedhitch We live just south of there I like hearing about CG from people that have been there

Howard Tyler, we have been surprised by how many campgrounds fill up on Thanksgiving. Long holiday weekends are really the only time we make reservations. I would recommend it.

Sonia I don't know anything about Calif., but I have always had trouble finding a spot Thanksgiving week  
Margo joined.

Mikey We always make reservations on a major holiday weekend

Howard We've zoomed through some discussion. Anyone else have any questions?

Mikey You may not be able to reserve a specific site, or even know which you want, but atleast you know you have a spot

Denyse is it hard to cancel? is it 24 hrs in advance?  
2\_4\_d\_hwy left.

Rick Thanks H

Jenny\_J thanks h very informative - have a couple pages of notesd

tylersamma Okay, just what we were afraid of. We have to plan ahead this month (and next).

Ken\_and\_Sarah Thanks Howard, this is very informative

emeacham Denyse, different places have different cancellation policies  
Ken\_and\_Sarah left.

speedhitch Yes I have got some good pointers here. Thanks Howard  
Jack\_Mayer left.

Jenny\_J left.

Sonia Thanks, Howard.

Howard Denyse, it's not hard to cancel, but there are lots of rules for cancellations that vary a lot! If you go through a reservation system the more chance there is of a big cancellation fee.

Denyse I have 11 pages.

Mikey Like Howard said, you might be surprised to see how many people go camp, That's usually our last outing for the year. and since it's a long weekend, I would imagine a lot of people do the same

Denyse ok

RVDude left.

speedhitch left.

Sonia left.

soontotravel Thanks H . I knew some of this from reading your journal. Lois emeacham left.

goldpaws Thank You Howard, Learned few things tonight

Margo left.

Mikey Denyse, The state parks in Alabama don't refund you, but will move your reservation to another date if you have to cancel

tylersamma Thanks

Howard Glad folks are picking up some tips. :)

Bama Has anyone stayed at Sanlan in Lakeland FL

Denyse for is great for wannabes,

Pa left.

Denyse and gonnabes

tylersamma left.

Howard Haven't heard of that one, Bama

Rick Adios All...

soontotravel H , Don & I are going on our 1st trip Fri. to Sevierville, Tn. for long wk-end.

Howard Bye Rick. Cool Soon. :)

Spatch left.

Mikey Soon, have you ever been to that area before

Howard Where are you staying in Sevierville?

Rick left.

goldpaws Good night all

Howard Nite paws!  
goldpaws left.

Denyse I guess the session is over. lol

Howard I'll stick around if there are more questions.

soontotravel Yes many times, but not camping. We're looking forward to it. Pray for NO Snow.lol

Howard How did you choose where you are staying?

Denyse DH was watching and asked the questions. We both learned a lot.

Mikey lol maybe none, we camped at eagles nest 2 yrs ago. we really enjoyed it. that was our first big trip

soontotravel River Plantation CG  
Dee left.

Mikey reveiws say its a nice place

Mikey i go to rvparkreveiw.com

soontotravel Friends recommended it.  
Bama left.

Howard Mikey, I use that site too. But lots of times, the things people hate about certain places are the reasons I would go there. :)

Lee Howard, this is Lee from LeedysBigAdventure.com.

soontotravel I looked at rvparksreview also. I like that site.

Lee We've emailed several times over the past 1.5 years.  
Bama joined.

Lee We hit the road shortly after you and Linda.

Lee We are in Fort Myers, FL. Wish you were here.

Mikey lol me too Howard, I try to read alot of the reveiws and see what the majority says,lol

Howard Good deal, Lee. I never know who I'm talking to anymore. :)

Howard Where are you in Fort Myers? Love the weather, hate the traffic and crowds down there in the winter.

Mikey Now, I do like roomy sites, and kinda out of town a little,lol  
Denyse left.

Howard Mikey, then you like where we stay. lol

Mikey lol are you out of town H

Lee Ft Myers Beach. Indian Creek. It is a Sun Resort. We paid \$250 for the month of November. How can you beet that?

Mikey We camped this past weekend in a place that was about 20 miles from

a decent sized town

Howard Right, Lee. We've done that - one time deal though, huh?

Mikey Lee, cant beat that at all

Bama left.

Lee Maybe, they never asked if we have done it before. I'm wondering if they would honor it at the other Sun resorts?

Howard Mikey, we are at Piney Grove COE in Mississippi. About 20 miles from decent sized town.

Mikey Howard, I am over on the east central side of Alabama

Howard Lee, I don't think they are supposed to, but I don't know if their computers would pick it up. :)

Lee It probably depends on how full they are.

soontotravel Lee do you belong to Sun Resort?

Lee No.

Lee Anyone can get that rate.

Howard Soon, Sun Resorts are a group of RV parks with permanent lots and park models as well. They run specials for first-timers to get you to visit. Really good deal in some warm locations.

Lee As Howard said that is a first time visit rate but they also run specials all the time.

Howard We stayed in Naples Florida in March of 2006 for \$250

Lee Indian Creek had a \$350 per month rate for November that anyone could get.

Lee This is a very nice place for \$350.

soontotravel Do you have to listen to a "seller"?

Mikey left.

Lee NO

Howard We didn't.

Lee No, sales pitch.

soontotravel Sounds Good

Howard Some of the folks that were paying \$1200 a month weren't too happy about it. :)

Lee It is awesome. We are two miles from te beach.

Lee We have 3 pools, tennis, shuffle board, horse shoes, activities, and on and on.

soontotravel I bet not. Well better go to bed. Have to finish packing the camper tommorrow.

Howard  
soontotravel

Bye Lois. [sunrvresorts.com](http://sunrvresorts.com) if you are interested. :)  
Thanks H. See ya.  
soontotravel left.