

# GOING CAMPING

By Christina Quick and Jennifer McClure

**Four family-friendly destinations that may surprise you**

**T**he secret is getting out. Church campgrounds, long associated with dormitories and dining halls, aren't just for church groups anymore. An increasing number of Assemblies of God campgrounds are catering to families and individuals — with accommodations that often rival those found in resorts, motels and commercial campgrounds. Set in prime locations at discount prices, they're an attractive alternative for many budget-minded travelers.

"We get a lot of people just passing through here," says Linda VanRiper, co-manager at Redwood Family Camp in Garberville, Calif. "We've had visitors from all over the United States, as well as Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. A lot of people don't realize we're a Christian campground until they pull in."

While ministry is still the focus of these district camps, VanRiper and others agree that serving the traveling public can be another form of outreach.

"We believe that when people come into our campground, they will feel the presence of the Lord," says Stacey O'Trembla, co-manager at Glacier Bible Camp in Hungry Horse, Mont. "We pray daily over our campground and ask God to touch hearts."

The faith-centered atmosphere is one of the features that attract guests. "We don't allow smoking or alcohol," says Randy O'Trembla, Stacey's husband. "We keep it family-friendly. People appreciate that."

Many visitors also find satisfaction in knowing their stay is funding ministry. As nonprofit establishments, all monies the district campgrounds collect go back into the facilities and church camp programs.

As you hit the road this summer, consider checking out one of the campgrounds featured here.

## **Redwood Family Camp**

**Location:** Garberville, Calif. (Northern California-Nevada District)

**Overnight options:** The year-round campground offers 50 tent sites and 42 RV sites (31 full-hookup and 12 with water and electricity). Two rustic cabins — each with a bunk bed and double bed, heat, lights and barbecue pit — accommodate up to four people. There are also screened tent-cabins and dorms with bunk beds. Seven cabins are reserved for Assemblies of God pastors and their families during district camping sessions.

**Amenities:** Restrooms, showers and laundry facilities are available for campers and cabin guests. An on-site store sells food and drinks, firewood, propane, ice and other camping supplies. Recreation offerings include a horseshoe pit, volleyball and basketball courts, a soccer/baseball field, tetherball, table tennis and a playground.

**Area attractions:** Located among California's towering redwoods, the region is a nature lover's dream. The campground is on the edge of Richardson State Park, which boasts nine miles of hiking trails. It's a short walk from the campground to the Eel River, where visitors enjoy swimming and fishing.

Garberville is just an hour south of the Avenue of the Giants, the famous scenic drive that meanders around — and even through — some of the world's largest trees. Or if you prefer ocean beaches, drive an hour west to Shelter Cove, where you may catch a glimpse of seals and migrating whales.

**Nice to know:** The Garberville region is considered bear country. Though there have been no known bear sightings in the campground, visitors are advised to keep food items properly sealed and secured.

For more information, call (707) 247-3380 or visit [redwoodfamilycamp.com](http://redwoodfamilycamp.com).





### Glacier Bible Camp

**Location:** Hungry Horse, Mont. (Montana District)

**Overnight options:** Glacier Mountain Lodge offers 28 motel rooms, including two large suites with private kitchenettes and hide-a-bed couches. Tent and RV campsites are also available, including several new riverside sites that are set to open this summer. Group lodges and other facilities are available for church camps, family reunions, wedding receptions and retreats.

**Amenities:** There is a miniature golf course, volleyball and basketball courts, and a coffee shop. The middle fork of the Flathead River runs along the campground's edge, making it an ideal place to fish for walleye and trout. Restrooms and showers are available for campers.

**Area attractions:** Glacier National Park — known for its diverse wildlife, snow-capped mountains and pristine lakes — is just eight miles from the campground. Hiking, fishing, horseback riding and whitewater rafting are popular local activities in the summer. Winter activities include skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling. There are several ski resorts in the area.

**Nice to know:** Reservations are encouraged, especially during the summer.

Access to some areas of the national park is restricted during the winter months. However, there are still plenty of activities in the area, and lodge rates are discounted between October and mid-April. Special weekday discounts are also available to AG ministers who reside in Montana.



The Appalachian Inn

An abundance of wild-life — including black bears, grizzly bears and mountain lions — inhabit the area. Keep your distance from wild animals and familiarize yourself with Glacier's safety guidelines. Remember to store food safely when camping.

For more information, call (406) 387-5502 or visit [glacierbiblecamp.org](http://glacierbiblecamp.org).

### The Appalachian Inn

**Location:** Ghent, W.Va. (Appalachian District)

**Overnight options:** Forty-eight motel rooms — including three deluxe rooms with a queen bed and a hide-a-bed sofa, coffeemaker, refrigerator and microwave — and a 64-bed dormitory are available year-round to groups, families or individuals. Six campsites with electric hookups and water access are also available.

**Amenities:** A 10,000-square-foot multipurpose building with classroom space and auditorium can accommodate several hundred guests. The spacious dining room can comfortably seat 180 people. (Meals must be prearranged by group leaders.) A microwave and coffeemaker are available to guests in the dining room. RV or tent campers have access to a bath house with 12 showers. An RV dump station is also available on the premises.

**Area attractions:** Located between Beckley and Princeton, W.Va., the Appalachian District campground lies near the slopes of Winterplace Ski Resort. It is also about 30 minutes away from whitewater rafting in Fayetteville.

**Nice to know:** Each year on the third Saturday of October, more than 200,000 people flock to the region to experience Bridge Day. On this day, the New River Gorge Bridge is transformed into a launching pad for BASE jumpers who parachute down into the New River Gorge 876 feet below. Rappellers descend the 31-year-old steel structure. It is also the only day of the year when pedestrians are allowed on the bridge. Vendors set up concessions on the structure for the day's events.

Though reservations are always required for groups, it is especially important to make them far in advance if planning to stay at the inn in October or during ski season. Appalachian Inn Manager Barbara Branch says ski season generally runs from mid-December through March, during which time the nearby Winterplace Ski Resort provides a shuttle service to inn guests.

For more information call (800) 231-0054 or visit [appalachianinn.net](http://appalachianinn.net).

### Camp Cedaredge

**Location:** Cedaredge, Colo. (Rocky Mountain District)

**Overnight options:** Nearly 60 RV campsites with water, electric and/or sewer hookups are available at Camp Cedaredge, as well as five hotel-style rooms, a two-room suite, and a 360-bed dormitory. There are also two studio cabins that sleep four each, a two-bedroom cabin that sleeps five and a three-bedroom cabin that sleeps seven.

**Amenities:** Of the camp's 66 acres, approximately 45 are wooded and undeveloped, providing trails and additional tent campsites. Tent campers have access to bathrooms



The Appalachian Inn



Camp Cedaredge



Camp Cedaredge

and showers. The camp also has a coin-operated laundry facility as well as an RV dump station.

Activities available at the camp include a high ropes course, paintball, inflatables, outdoor basketball, sand beach volleyball, mini-golf, an outdoor climbing wall, three zip lines and the Screamer — a giant 40-foot swing. Wireless Internet is also available to guests.

When it comes to meals, Camp Cedaredge is a licensed campground with the state of Colorado, offering anything from cafeteria-style dining to plated meals.

**Area attractions:** Camp Cedaredge sits on the south side of

the Grand Mesa — the world's tallest flattop mountain. On the opposite side of the mesa is Powderhorn Ski Resort, about a 30-mile drive from the campground. A 45-minute drive south will land guests at the Black Canyon of the Gunnison River National Park. Other nearby activities include fishing, hunting, ATV and snowmobile rentals, and horseback riding.

**Nice to know:** The Rocky Mountain District of the Assemblies of God regularly offers family camps at Cedaredge.

“Family camps provide a connection between all ages as they worship together, play together and get away together. It's a great time for people from different churches to connect,” says Camp Cedaredge Director Gary Jensen.

Discounts are available to large groups, ministers and for multiple days. More information is available by calling (970) 856-6343. **tpe**

E-mail your comments to [tpe@ag.org](mailto:tpe@ag.org).

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