Summer Camping

To Boondock or not to Boondock

Hot Weather PM for your RV

Prep your RV for Summer

Father of the Motorhome

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# IN THIS ISSUE

6 **Maximize your RV for Summertime**  
Tips on how-to help your RV work more efficiently in the summer heat.

12 **Hot Weather PM for your RV**  
With the hot weather upon us I thought it was appropriate to list some simple preventive maintenance checks you can perform on your RV.

20 **To Boondock or not to Boondock**  
Discover exactly what boondocking is and decide if it is right for you.

30 **RV History - Ray Frank**  
**Father of the Motorhome**  
Learn where the term “motorhome” came from, based on one man’s vehicle design intended solely for his family’s personal use.

# DEPARTMENTS

4 **Editor’s Desk**

16 **RVing with Mark Polk & Friends**  
Read Mark’s interview with author, photographer and RV lifestyle expert Bob Difley.

26 **Favorite RV Destinations**  
The Fayetteville NC KOA RV park

34 **RV Product Spotlight**  
Protect your RV water system with a standard or lead-free RV water regulator by Valterra Products.
How will you Remember your travels?

The laptop we would’ve used to keep in touch with the kids.

The guy from Ed’s Towing. Spent three hours with him.

Cook’s Field, the week after we missed the Bluegrass Festival.

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Hello Fellow Campers,

I don’t know about where you live, but the heat is on where we’re at. For RV owner’s that means one thing, getting the RV ready for some fun in the sun.

The focus of this issue is to get you and your RV ready to deal with the summer heat. Some simple hot weather preventive maintenance checks can make your summer camping trips more enjoyable and trouble-free.

After reading this issue you’ll be ready to stock the fridge, load the RV and **JUST RV IT this summer**.

Sit back, relax and let’s get our RVs ready for some summer camping fun!

Happy RV Learning,

*Mark*

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“Something I like about RVing is you never know where you will be enjoying your next morning cup of coffee” ~ *Mark Polk*
RV Education 101 has a brand new RV video site designed to help educate you on RV how-to topics, RV products, RV tips and much more.

With over 50 informative RV videos RV101.TV is your #1 RV video source on the web. The videos are grouped by category covering every RV topic imaginable, so it’s easy to find what you are looking for or what you want to learn more about.

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Learn about your RV the easy way at RV101.TV
Summer is a great time to go camping, but it can be taxing on some of your RV appliances. Here are a few tips on how you can help your RV work more efficiently, and make your camping trips more pleasurable when the heat is on.

**RV Air Conditioner:**
You can improve your RV air conditioners efficiency by keeping the A/C filters clean. In most cases you can wash the filters in warm soapy water, rinse thoroughly and allow them to dry before reinstalling. Another option is to clean the filters with a small hand held vacuum cleaner. Try to keep a spare set of A/C filters on hand in the event the old filters have seen better days.

Ask for a shady site when you check in at the campground. This will not only help cool the RV down, but your refrigerator and roof A/C will work much more efficiently.

Use your patio awning and any window awnings to assist in cooling the RV down. In addition to the awnings use your window blinds or curtains to help keep the sun out and the cooler air in.

**RV Refrigerator:**
The initial cool down process can take 4 to 6 hours. You should turn it on the day before you plan to leave, and before you put any food in it. When you do put food in the refrigerator the food should already be cold, and the food put in the freezer should already be frozen. Putting cold food in the refrigerator, rather than warm food allows the refrigerator to work more efficiently.

One common mistake made is to over pack the refrigerator. There has to be space between the foods to allow for air to circulate throughout the compartment. In most situations you will have access to a store where you can buy food. A 3 or 4 day supply of food should be enough. To assist with air circulation you can purchase an inexpensive, battery operated refrigerator fan. Put the batteries in the fan and place it in the front of the refrigerator compartment blowing up (cold air drops and warm air rises).
The fan will improve the efficiency by circulating the air and it will reduce the initial cool down time by up to 50%.

The heat created by the cooling process is vented behind the refrigerator. Air enters through the outside lower refrigerator vent and helps to draft the hot air out through the roof vent.

Periodically inspect the back of the refrigerator and the roof vent for any obstructions like bird nests, leaves or other debris that might prevent the heat from escaping.

The outside temperature also affects the operation and efficiency of your RV refrigerator. When it’s really hot outside try parking your RV with the side the refrigerator is on in the shade. Periodically inspect and clean the refrigerator door gaskets. Check them for a good seal. Place a dollar bill behind the seal and close the door. It should stay there and not drop. When you try to pull it out there should be some resistance felt. Do this in several different places and have any damaged seals replaced.

Try to limit opening the refrigerator or freezer doors, and the length of time you leave the doors open.

Every time the door is opened it loses a few degrees of cooling. On a hot summer day it won’t take long to lose its cooling capacity.

**RV Ventilation:**

Another key ingredient to keeping your RV cool is proper ventilation. Proper ventilation helps prevent excess heat from building up in your RV and gives heat that is in the RV a way to escape from the RV.

Install Maxx Air vent covers over the roof vents to allow for ventilation. They are inexpensive, easy to install and they let the fresh air in, even when it’s raining. I use a vent cover on each end of our RV to promote cross ventilation. [Watch the installation video.](#)

Install a high powered 12-volt ventilator fan. These fans have intake and exhaust modes. The intake mode operates similar to a ceiling fan and the exhaust mode helps remove heat, odors and stale musty air. Watch a [Maxx Fan installation video](#)

Take a couple of small portable fans with you to help circulate the air. If for some reason you can’t run the A/C you’ll be glad you have them.

**RV 101**
TRAVEL CHANNEL’S: AMERICA’S CRAZIEST RVS
High Noon Entertainment, the producers of Cake Boss, Heat Seekers, Bang for Your Buck and Food Network Challenge is thrilled to be producing a no holds barred special for Travel Channel that takes an inside peek at America’s most tricked out, pimped out and over-the-top RVs. From the converted school bus to the Boatorhome and everything in between, America’s Craziest RVS is looking for the most outrageous vehicles and the people who own and design them.

Want to share your recreational vehicular creation with the rest of America? If you can drive it and sleep in it, we want to see it! All interested vans, buses, campers, trailers and their owners are welcome to apply. Please contact us at rvshow@highnoontv.com

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Travel Channel is the world’s leading travel media brand, and the network is available in nearly 96 million US cable homes. It’s a place for consumers to experience great storytelling, shared human connections, and engaging talent that celebrate the surprising encounters that happen right here and right now.

Join the JUST RV IT campaign. Bumpers stickers are available for $2.95 BUY NOW
**Leveling**

First and foremost the RV must be fairly level for the refrigerator to operate properly. Older RV refrigerators required more precise leveling, but even the newer models need to be close to level for optimum performance.

Over time a cooling unit operated out of level will be permanently damaged. Traveling with the refrigerator on will not cause problems because the liquids and gases in the cooling unit are constantly moving around. They don’t collect and stay in areas of the cooling unit like they can in a stationary, out of level refrigerator.

**Initial Cool Down**

The initial cool down process can take four to six hours. You should turn the refrigerator on the day before you plan to leave, and before you put any food in it. When you do load the refrigerator the food you put in should already be cold, and the food put in the freezer should already be frozen.

**Vent Fan**

Install a 12 volt, thermostatically controlled refrigerator vent fan at the back of the refrigerator, or at the top of the roof vent, to assist with drafting the hot air away from the refrigerator. If you are mechanically inclined these fans are fairly easy to install, or you can have your RV dealer install one for you. Either way it’s worth it. The fan removes the heat built-up behind the refrigerator improving the refrigerators performance by up to 40%.

**Outside Temperature**

The outside temperature also affects the operation and efficiency of your RV refrigerator. When hot outside you may need to raise the temperature setting. Some refrigerators are preset by the manufacturer. Extremely hot weather will directly affect the refrigerators efficiency. When it’s really hot outside try parking your RV with the side the refrigerator is on in the shade. Periodically inspect and clean the refrigerator door gaskets. Check them for a good seal. Place a dollar bill behind the seal and close the door. It should stay there and not drop. When you try to pull it out there should be some resistance felt. Do this in several different places and have any damaged seals replaced.

RV absorption refrigerators do a great job for RVers. They will do an even better job, and last longer, if we apply these simple tips to make their job easier and less demanding. **RV 101**
Q&A with Mark

**Question:**
Hi Mark, My question is will the standard converter charger in my 5th wheel charge two 6-volt batteries connected in series? It originally came equipped with one 12-volt battery.

Thank you in advance for any help you can offer.

**Answer:**
Good question. When batteries are wired in series the voltage increases but the amperage remains the same. So, when two 6-volt batteries are wired in series you still have a 12-volt system. If the batteries are installed properly the converter charger in the 5th wheel will work fine.

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Before heading out on your summer camping adventures be sure to visit our RV Summer Safety Program at my [BLOG](www.rvconsumer.com).

The program provides you with pertinent RV safety related articles, information and a [FREE online RV safety e-course](www.rvconsumer.com) to help keep you safe while you are out enjoying your RV travel adventures this summer.

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**RV Quick Tip**

To help keep the inside of the RV cool try to avoid opening the door as much as possible and cook outside rather than inside whenever possible. If all else fails head to the campground pool and cool off!
Did you ever wish you had more light in those dimly lit areas of your RV? I think it happens to most of us, you would like more lighting in a closet or under a cabinet to make it easier to see. Wiring a 12-volt or 120-volt light in your RV is not always possible, so what other options do we have?

I found the perfect solution for lighting up those hard to see areas. They are Rite Lite Wireless LED Puck Lights. LED stands for light emitting diode. These wireless LED lights are extremely energy efficient and work off of 3 triple A batteries. They have 5 super bright white lights that will last up to 100,000 hours. The lights feature a one touch on/off switch with a dimmer, and the light head swivels and pivots for easy positioning of the light.

Another great feature is the optional light sensor. If you place it in a closet the light will automatically come on when ambient light is detected and it turns off without ambient light. There is a setting for high ambient light or low ambient light. There are no wires, plugs or difficult installation. It installs in seconds with the hook and loop tape or with the screw provided.

The wireless LED puck lights work great in all those dark or dimly lit areas of your RV and they are great to have during power outages too. I use them in the RV and around the house. Visit this link for more information on these long lasting energy efficient LED puck lights. Don’t leave home without them.
When I was in the military I was in charge of some very large fleet maintenance operations. As a maintenance officer a term that was near and dear to me was preventive maintenance. Preventive maintenance is maintenance you perform on your vehicle before a problem exists. These checks are designed to prevent or identify potential problems that could lead to mechanical breakdown, malfunction or failure of a component or system.

Preventive maintenance consists of cleaning, inspecting, lubricating, adjusting and servicing your vehicle. In the military there were preventive maintenance checks that the vehicle operator was responsible for and preventive maintenance checks that different echelons of maintenance personnel were responsible for and performed.

Since my days in the military I continue to perform preventive maintenance on my automobiles and RV. For the most part I would classify these checks as operator level preventive maintenance checks that almost anyone is capable of performing. Don’t confuse this with scheduled maintenance. Scheduled or routine maintenance is performed in intervals normally based on time, mileage or hours. Scheduled maintenance is designed to keep your vehicles in top operating condition and prevent untimely breakdowns and repairs.

**Note:** It is absolutely essential that you read your owner’s manual and warranty information in regards to who is responsible for what when it comes to scheduled maintenance. Scheduled maintenance that is required by the manufacturer and not performed can sometimes void your warranty.

With the hot weather upon us I thought it appropriate to list some simple preventive maintenance checks you can make on your automobile or RV before heading out on a trip. We’ll start with the chassis maintenance.

**Chassis Hot Weather Preventive Maintenance:**

**Check your owner’s manual** for routine and scheduled maintenance intervals. Have all scheduled maintenance performed as recommended.
Check all fluid levels: engine oil, transmission, power steering, brakes, windshield washer. Top off levels according to owner’s manual guidelines.

Check the air filter: A dirty air filter can lower fuel economy by 10%, replace as required.

Check for any leaks: Inspect the engine compartment and underside of the RV for any signs of leaks. Leaks of any type can lead to costly repairs and untimely breakdowns. Catching a leak early can save time and money. Identify the source of the leak and have it repaired before using the RV.

Check radiator coolant: Check the radiator coolant reservoir level, condition and concentration. Never remove any radiator cap when hot or under pressure. The reservoir is usually a see-through plastic reservoir with add and full marks on the side. Add coolant as required. Follow the manufacturer’s recommendation for having the radiator flushed and the proper type and concentration of coolant to use.

Radiator & heater hoses: Coolant hoses deteriorate from the inside out. Inspect all hoses for wear, cracks, soft spots, brittle areas and leaks. Inspect hose clamps for secure mounting. Replace any damaged hoses.

Belts: Inspect all belts for wear, glazing, fraying, cracks and proper tension. Place your thumb in the middle of the belt between the pulleys.

When you press on the belt there should be about a ½ inch deflection. Replace damaged, worn or stretched belts as required. Belts with automatic tensioners do not require adjustments.

Lights: Make sure all lights are clean and operating properly. Check the headlights (low & high beam), running lights, turn signals, brake lights and emergency flashers. Check all lights on any vehicle or trailer you are towing behind the motor home. Carry spare bulbs and fuses for the lights. Repair or replace as required.

Windshield wipers & blades: Inspect the operation and condition of wipers and blades. Don’t wait until the wiper blades are worn and brittle. Replace blades at the first indication of poor operation. Cleaning the blades will prolong their life. Use windshield washer fluid on a rag to clean wiper blades.

Chassis & Coach Batteries: Caution: Never work around batteries with an open flame. To prevent the possibility of arcing always disconnect the negative battery cable when working on or around batteries. If you have a maintenance free battery you will not be able to perform some of the checks below. The color of the eye on the battery will indicate the condition of a maintenance free battery.
Consult your owner’s manual. Constant charging depletes electrolyte levels in batteries. Inspect electrolyte levels and add distilled water as required. Add water until level reaches the split-level marker in each cell. Inspect all battery cable and terminal connections. Keep all connections clean and tight. You can clean batteries using a 50/50 diluted baking soda and water solution. After you clean the batteries flush thoroughly with clean water.

Check the state of charge and keep batteries fully charged. Specific gravity readings for a charged battery should be between 1.215 & 1.250. Follow proper charging instructions for the type of battery. Deep cycle batteries require a lower amp charge over a longer period of time.

**Tires:** Using a quality inflation pressure gauge, check and inflate tire pressure to the tire manufacturers recommended pressure. Always check and inflate tire pressure when tires are cold, before traveling. Inspect all tires for signs of uneven wear and for checking or dry rot on the sidewalls. If one tire shows signs of wear faster than another it may be a signal of something other than normal wear. Have any tire damage inspected by an authorized service center. Do not operate the RV with tires that show signs of damage.

**Check your emergency kit:** At a minimum it should include a flashlight, extra batteries, jumper cables, first aid kit, basic hand tools, and warning devices.

**Test the roof air conditioner(s) for proper operation.** Clean or replace A/C filters.

**Test the refrigerator in the A/C & LP gas mode.** Do not over pack the refrigerator. Allow room for air circulation in the refrigerator compartments. Install a thermostatically controlled refrigerator vent fan to maximize the refrigerators efficiency.

**Strategically park your RV** to take advantage of any shade. This can make the refrigerator and roof A/C operate more efficiently.

**Install some type of roof vent covers** to allow ventilation inside the RV.

**Check all awnings** for proper operation.

**Check the operation of the generator** when it is under a load. Check the generator engine oil & all filters. It may be necessary to change oil with the manufacturers recommended oil viscosity for hot weather operation. Put the summer/winter preheat lever in the summer position (if equipped). Always inspect the generator exhaust system prior to operating the generator.
Now that your RV is ready for the summer heat

JUST RV IT

Check all appliances, electric and gas, for proper operation.

It may be necessary to add more chemicals when treating the black tank during hot weather camping.

Check the fire extinguisher, smoke alarm, carbon monoxide and LP leak detector

Take all precautions when traveling with pets in hot weather. Never leave them inside a hot RV. Give them plenty of fresh water and ventilation.

A little preventive maintenance can go a long way. Remember the lack of preventive maintenance and scheduled maintenance can result in emergency maintenance. Emergency maintenance is maintenance or repairs required when you least expect it due to component, system or mechanical failure. Something we can all do without! RV 101
Recently I had the privilege to interview our friend and colleague Bob Difley. Bob was General Manager of Northern California for El Monte RV Centers before choosing to become a fulltime RVer. He is a freelance writer and photographer, RV lifestyle expert and book author.

Bob and his wife Lynn are nature lovers and enjoy a very active outdoor lifestyle of mountain biking, hiking, kayaking, and swimming and a regular exercise regimen of aerobic activities, weight training, and flexibility.

Together they started the Healthy RV Lifestyle Web Site in order to pass on to others their knowledge, pitfalls and highlights, and enjoyment of the RV lifestyle and how important it is to practice healthy living habits in order to stay active, enjoying the RV lifestyle to its fullest.

**MP:** Let’s get right to it. Hi Bob, thanks for taking some time out of your busy schedule to answer a few questions.

**BD:** Hi Mark, it is my pleasure.

**MP:** I know you have a background with RVs, working as a General Manager for El Monte RV Centers, but what led to the decision to go fulltime in your RV?

**BD:** Being around RVs every day, as I was at work, had a tendency to focus my attention—usually on watching our customers drive off the lot headed for all those great places I wanted to visit. Our European customers would visit more of America on their month-long vacations than I had been to—and I was a native. I bought my Bounder (we were Bounder dealers) a couple years before I semi-retired with the intent of fulltiming for a year or two before deciding what we wanted to do with the rest of our lives. As the years went by and we became more and more reluctant to give up the fulltiming lifestyle, our short term vacation from working ended up being seventeen years long.
MP: Wow, that’s what I call the ultimate short term vacation. When folks hear the term "camping" or "RVing" many thoughts come to mind. What comes to mind when you hear these terms?

BD: The ambiguity of the two terms can be confusing. Tents and backpackers don't think that RVers are camping. Many boondocking RVers think of themselves as camping, but not those RVers staying in fancy RV resorts or Walmart parking lots. If RVers use their rig to visit relatives and stay in their driveway, are they camping? If young techies stay outside an Apple store in a tent overnight to be the first to buy the newest iPad, are they camping?

For the most part, it is immaterial. Most of us who use an RV--whether a van conversion, 21-foot Class C motorhome, fifth-wheel, travel trailer, or a 40-foot diesel pusher--are all RVers, regardless of what we use our RV for. We could be using our rig for anything from conducting a business from the rig traveling from trade show to trade show, a chili cook-off competitor traveling the cook-off circuit, participants who travel between square-dancing events and competitions, visiting our national parks, monuments, and historic sites, or boondocking with Mother Nature. We are not always camping, which to me means being out in nature, but we are always RVing.

MP: That’s a great explanation Bob! Both you and your wife Lynn lead a very active lifestyle. Can you offer other RVers a couple of tips for staying healthy and active while on the road?

BD: In a word, Keep Moving! OK, that's two words. If you don't keep moving, your joints stiffen, you lose flexibility (increasing the chance of falling--and breaking a bone), you gain un-needed weight, your endurance capacity drops--all inhibiting your ability to live an active lifestyle. Unfortunately, too many advertising images of campers show them as campchair-potatoes sitting around a campfire. And how many of us would admit that we watch too much TV? It is movement that keeps us active, feeling good, and healthy when on the road. There is so much to see and do as an RVer in the places we visit, and exploring them is a big part of the RV Lifestyle. In conjunction with staying active, eating right is the other half of the equation. For your body to function properly, it needs the right fuel, and that fuel is healthy food--meaning plenty of fruits and vegetables, reducing--if not eliminating--from our diet the amount of carbohydrates made with white flour and anything made with white sugar, eating a well-rounded diet with a minimum of prepared foods, and choosing lean meat, free-range fowl, and fish as protein sources. Lynn is 66 years old (am I allowed to say that?) and still teaches intensely cardiovascular-pushing exercise classes. And I (at 73) still run and lift weights--and we do our exercise routine 6 to 7 days a week.
But, we're kind of fanatics, you don't have to do this much exercise to stay healthy and active. But be sure to eat healthy most of the time and get some form of movement or exercise every day.

**MP:** That’s some excellent advice we can all learn and benefit from. What would you consider some of your favorite pastimes while RVing?

**BD:** Well, let's see if I can think of a couple. Finding a great boondocking campsite where we can't see any other people or signs of civilization; hiking trails to scenic vistas, waterfalls, and unusual natural features; rugged mountain biking trails; swimming in lakes; taking wildflower walks; getting lots of visitors to our birdfeeders; visiting wetlands and seeing thousands of birds simultaneously take flight; visiting historic sites and living history museums; visiting prehistoric Native American sites; exploring national parks, monuments, and seashores; driving our National Scenic Byways; kayaking bays, lakes, and rivers; watching the full moon rise; looking at the Milky Way and identifying stars and constellations on a perfectly clear and dark night in the desert with no air or light pollution; and going to bed at night dead tired from all we did that day and falling asleep while reading a good book. Then, for tomorrow . . . Leading a **Healthy RV Lifestyle** is what makes it all possible.

**MP:** That kind of sums up what RVing is all about. Thanks for joining us today, and thanks for all the great advice. Tell Lynn hello too.

**BD:** Will do, thanks Mark I enjoyed it.

Be sure and read Bob’s boondocking article on page 20 of this issue, and for more information on Bob's e-books visit these links:

**BOONDOCKING: Finding the Perfect Campsite on America's Public Lands** *(PDF or Kindle)*

**111 Ways to Get the Biggest Bang for your RV Lifestyle Buck** *(PDF or Kindle)*

**Snowbird Guide to Boondocking in the Southwestern Deserts** *(PDF or Kindle)*
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Click on the link to view archives of past RV polls
If you've never "boondocked" your reaction to the term would probably include these two questions:

(1) What is boondocking?
(2) Why would anyone want to boondock?

Boondocking comes from "bundok" in the Tagalog language of the Philippine Islands and means "mountain." Its colloquial use refers to the rural, sparsely populated inland areas of the islands that are usually mountainous and difficult to access (according to Wikipedia).

Boondocking as used in the RV community is not strictly defined, but in its more generic definition meaning camping without water, sewage, or electrical hookups, though this form of camping is more accurately called "dry camping." What differentiates dry camping from boondocking is where you do it. When you are dry camping you are not necessarily boondocking, but when you are boondocking, you are definitely dry camping. Boondocking means camping out away from civilization, away from amenities, in more scenic and rustic settings, in the "boondocks."

On the other hand, when you spend the night in a Walmart or Cracker Barrel parking lot you are dry camping. Camping in state park campgrounds, at NASCAR events, RV rallies, rock concerts, forest service campgrounds, or any other organized event or campground without hookups, you are dry camping.

There are three main reasons why RVers dry camp:

(1) To save on campground fees
(2) The event they are attending or campground where they are staying does not have hookups
(3) They want to boondock in natural surroundings, away from crowds, noise, and neighbors, in peaceful solitude.
Well, almost. There are—of course—gray areas, such as at Quartzsite, where RVers boondock all over the desert, sometimes in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Long Term Visitor Areas (LTVA) crowded in with a bunch of other RVers, sometimes driving further into the desert to avoid such crowding. Both are considered boondocking.  

So that brings up the next question: Why would anyone want to camp where there were no water, sewage, or electrical hookups? The rationale is that camping in an RV resort or full-service campground is quite convenient, easy, and comfortable, and living without those hookups would seem to make it less enjoyable—and somehow anti-RV.  

In reality, all modern RVs have been manufactured to be not only mobile, but also to enable camping independent of appendages that hook them up to land-based resources. All RVs have a holding tank for fresh water, and most of the time two holding tanks for waste, one from the toilet and one from the shower and sinks. They also have a house battery—sometimes two or more—to supply 12-volt electricity to the RV. Most also have a generator that produces and sends 120-volt electricity directly to certain appliances and fixtures, and will recharge the batteries. So when you are able to utilize your RV’s systems, and do not need a campground’s, it opens up
many more camping possibilities and vast natural areas for enjoying your RV lifestyle. This would include millions of acres of public lands managed by the National Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The FS manages the nation's 155 national forests and 20 national grasslands covering 193 million acres. The BLM manages approximately 253 million acres—*one-eighth of the landmass of the country*—most of it in the West. These massive areas, and more managed by other agencies of the Federal Government such as the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, are known collectively as federal public lands.

If you only camp in campgrounds or RV resorts, think how much of the country's wonderful natural and scenic land you are missing, not to mention the joy of solitude when you find a boondocking campsite by a tumbling mountain stream or on a broad desert mesa under the shade of a mesquite tree—and there is no one else in sight.

First, though, you have to learn how to be comfortable camping without hookups. You can start off with boondocking for just one or two nights, which won’t tax your onboard systems. But to camp longer than that you need to learn some conservation techniques and alter some of your normal habits, which I hate to say, might be quite wasteful.

**FOR INSTANCE . . .**

Conserve your fresh water supply by taking Navy showers—rinsing down, turning off water, soaping up, rinsing off. Wash your hands the same way. And while you are warming up the water, run it into a plastic tub or bucket and use it to flush the toilet or rinse dishes. Rinse dishes in the tub of water, rather than under a running faucet. When washing dishes, use just a small container of soapy water. Carry extra Jerry jugs or gallon containers of water to dump in your tank in case your water pump starts sucking air.

Wipe food off your dishes before washing, then dump your wash and rinse water (but only if you use biodegradable soap) on a thirsty plant several yards outside your campsite. You can also dig a hole in which to pour the waste water. Filling your gray water tank is one of the more limiting factors in how long you can boondock, so prevent as much waste water from entering the tank as you can. With a little practice you will be surprised at how much water you previously wasted. You will also want to conserve electricity so that your house batteries last as long as possible.
Turn off lights, TV, radio, porch light, computers and any other electrical appliance or tool when it is not being used (a good idea even when not boondocking).

Wake up with the sun and go to bed when it does, so you don’t have to burn lights well into the dark of night. Use battery operated book lights for reading—and you won’t keep your mate awake by reading with the bright RV lights.

If you need to use a 120-volt appliance like the microwave, blender, or coffee grinder, or your battery-draining water pump, try to schedule using these in the same block of time while running the generator, which will power them directly without pulling amps out of your batteries.

FINDING BOONDOCKING CAMPSITES:
Stop at visitor centers and chambers of commerce for area or state maps that show recreational lands, such as with colored shading to designate the various public lands. Ask in BLM and FS offices or ranger stations for maps of "dispersed camping" areas, the official terminology for boondocking campsites. Most roads to these sites will be dirt but were built solidly for logging and cattle trucks and fire-fighting equipment and should be suitable for RVs. Ask for a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) that will show which roads are suitable to drive on and locations of dispersed campsites.

A FEW SUGGESTED BOONDOCKING LOCATIONS
Washington's Wenatchee National Forest is a vast forested area on the eastern flanks of the Cascade Range near Mt. Rainier to the northeast. Out of Yakima, US 12 and State 410 split just past Naches. US 12 follows the Tieton River to the south entrance of Mt. Rainier National Park and State 410 along the Naches River over 5,400 foot Chinook Pass to the north entrance. All along both routes, watch for forest service roads that lead to several scattered boondocking sites along the rivers. These are good base camps for exploring the national park and forest trails.

Bob is also an avid photographer. All of the photo’s used in this article were photographed by him.
BOB DIFLEY, formerly general manager of a national RV rental and sales company, was a fulltime RVer for seventeen years, and is a writer, photographer, hiker, kayaker, runner, mountain biker, snowbird, and boondocker. His travel, destination, and nature articles and photos have appeared in MotorHome, Trailer Life, Good Sam’s Highways, Coast to Coast, Better RVing, RV Life, Woodall’s Regional Publications, Western RV News, and RV Journal magazines and he posts to several blogs as well as to his Healthy RV Lifestyle website. He taught seminars and classes at the Life On Wheels RV conferences, at RV Rallies, and was an interpretive program presenter for Arizona State Parks.

The Sawtooth National Recreation Area sits in the middle of the Sawtooth National Forest and is adjacent to two wilderness areas. Though several primitive campgrounds are within the NRA, free dispersed (boondocking) camping is permitted along the Salmon River south of Stanley, as well as northeast of town in the national forest. Hiking trails allow access into the Sawtooth Wilderness Area.

For more on boondocking, check out Bob's ebooks: BOONDOCKING: Finding the Perfect Campsite on America's Public Lands (PDF or Kindle), 111 Ways to Get the Biggest Bang for your RV Lifestyle Dollar (PDF or Kindle), and Snowbird Guide to Boondocking in the Southwestern Deserts (PDF or Kindle).
From now through summer, RVers can receive a special $25 manufacturer’s rebate when they upgrade their RV bathroom with a new, best-in-class Thetford permanent toilet.

Toilets purchased between May 1-August 31 are rebate eligible. Models included in the promotion are Aria Classic or Deluxe II, Aqua-Magic V (hand and foot flush), Aqua-Magic Style II or Style Plus, and Bravura.

Rebate coupons are available at select retail outlets and can be downloaded from the Thetford website.

Our “Go for the RV Gold” program is a self-paced online RV training program offering over 45 one-on-one RV training videos, 50 feature articles, 60 RV tips and much more.

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The Fayetteville KOA RV park is rated in the top 1% of all KOAs in the USA. You can’t get any better than that and there is good reason for it. This award winning KOA has a great staff and the grounds are maintained in immaculate condition. This Fayetteville KOA has recently undergone some major improvements and expansion. There’s a new cool pool, 70 new super sites, a new bathhouse with laundry and a 31 channel Direct TV, making this already terrific campground even better.

It’s only a half mile off Interstate 95 at exit 61. That puts it halfway between New York and Orlando Florida. Whether you’re traveling North or South on I95 this is a great place to plan a stop. No rig is too big for the Fayetteville/Wade KOA, where you will be escorted to extra-large pull through sites, complete with free cable TV and complimentary Wi-Fi. It’s a quiet and relaxed park-like setting with lots of grass and mature pecan, black walnut and plum shade trees.
The campground is close to Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force bases. In nearby Fayetteville you can visit the Airborne & Special Operations Museum, and browse through flea markets, Cross Creek Mall, outlet malls and antique shops. If you play golf there are a number of the beautiful golf courses in the area too.

The Fayetteville Wade KOA offers tent camping sites and 30 and 50 amp RV sites. If you don’t have a tent or an RV there are comfortable heated and air conditioned Camping Cabins with flat screen TVs, and the new cottage comes complete with a half-bath.

There are two pet playgrounds, two bathhouses and two swimming pools so you don’t need to go far to access all the amenities. If you run short on food or camping supplies there is a well stocked store including souvenirs and if your propane cylinders or tank needs topped of the staff will be glad to help you out.

The Fayetteville KOA RV park has won numerous KOA Founders and Presidents awards attesting to the over-all appeal this campground has to offer. Whether you’re passing through, stopping for a few days or staying for an extended period of time you’re always welcome at the Fayetteville Wade KOA. There are lots of things to do and places to visit in the surrounding area, but you may enjoy the campground so much that you won’t want to leave.

For more information on the Fayetteville Wade KOA visit www.koa.com

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### RV Electrical Tip

Here are a couple simple formulas to help calculate electrical demands in your RV.

- **Watts / Volts = Amps**
- **Amps X Volts = Watts**

Something else to keep in mind is many RV appliances require more amps to start the appliance than it does to run the appliance. A roof air conditioner might draw 15 or 16 amps to start, but may only use 12 amps once it is up and running. **RV 101**

Use Maxx Air vent covers to ventilate your RV rain or shine  
[www.maxxair.com](http://www.maxxair.com)
**Screen Room** – A screened-in enclosure that attaches to the exterior of an RV. Screen rooms provide protection from insects and rain.

**Sewer Hose** – A flexible hose that attaches to the RV sewer outlet and the campground sewer. It is used to dump or empty holding tanks. You should keep a 10’ and 20’ heavy-duty sewer hose available along with the necessary sewer hose attachments.

**Sewer Hose Donut** – A plastic or rubber ring used to get a good seal between the sewer hose and the campground sewer connection. Sewer hose donuts are required at some campgrounds.

**Shore Power** – Shore power is a term used for plugging the RV into an external 120-volt power source, like at a campground.

**Slide-In** – A truck camper that slides into the bed of a pickup truck.

**Slide-Out** – A section of the RV that slides-out to provide you with additional living space. Some RVs have multiple slide-outs.

**Slider Hitch** – A 5\(^{th}\) wheel hitch used on short wheel base pickup trucks. With short wheel base trucks the front of the 5\(^{th}\) wheel trailer can make contact with the cab of the truck when turning at a sharp angle. A slider hitch has two positions. One for normal driving conditions and one for maneuvering where turns are required.

**Snowbird** – A term for RVers who head to warmer climates during the winter months.

**Stabilizer Jacks** – Jacks used on the corners of an RV to stabilize the trailer when it is set up at the campground. Some are mounted to the frame of the RV and others are portable. Stabilizer jacks are not designed to level the trailer, just to stabilize it. They are also referred to as scissor jacks.

**Stick and Tin** – An RV with wood framing and corrugated aluminum exterior siding.

**Surge Brakes** – A hydraulic braking system used on some lightweight trailers. Surge brakes activate when the trailer surges or pushes against the hitch ball when braking or slowing down.

**Sway Control** – A device used to help control trailer sway when traveling. There are two basic types of add-on sway control, friction and cam action.
In 1958, Ray Frank, owner of a small trailer manufacturing company in Brown City, Michigan, a small town north of Detroit, on Michigan’s east coast, designed and built a small custom “house car”, as self-propelled RVs had been identified since they were first conceived about 40 years earlier. It was a vehicle that he intended solely for his family’s personal use and enjoyment.

He and his family called it their “motorhome”. The coach was unique, at the time, in that it was designed from the ground up to be a motorized recreation vehicle, it was neither a trailer to which additional wheels and an engine were added, as were some of the early model “house cars”, nor was it converted from an existing bus or truck chassis.
It was also unique in that it was the first recognized time that the term “motor home” was applied to a motorized RV, thus beginning the transition from the description “house car”, which had been in common use for over 40 years, to the name universally recognized today.

This very first “motor home” proved to be so popular with everyone who saw it on the road or in campgrounds that, after a few travels with his family, and considerable looking for available component suppliers, Ray went directly to the Dodge Division of Chrysler Corporation to investigate the bulk purchase of bare truck chassis on which to produce more of his coaches.

Dodge refused to sell its chassis to him directly and referred him to a nearby Dodge truck dealer named Lloyd Bridges with whom he was able to negotiate a contract for his first 100 chassis.

“House cars” had been custom made or converted one at a time from other vehicles since the early 1920s but Ray Frank’s new motor homes were also the first motorized recreational vehicles that were built expressly to be distributed through a franchised dealer body. Bridges, in turn, signed on with Frank to become one of his first dealers and the motorized RV dealership that was created by that original order and the ensuing purchase of finished coaches continues today, operated by Mr. Bridges’ sons.
As he got his production of Frank Motor Homes started as a sideline to his trailer business, Ray built 6 units in 1960 and 131 in 1961, when the name was changed from Frank to Dodge Motor Homes. These were, in effect, the first assembly line produced motor homes.

For the first 3 years, Frank’s motor home design included a boxy looking aluminum body but with the industry’s first molded fiberglass nose and tail section. In 1963, the universally recognized rounded all-fiberglass body was introduced using a design and renderings created by Ray’s son, Ron Frank, who was only 18 years old at the time but obviously had an eye for style and design. At this time, demand accelerated dramatically and his production quickly increased to over 700 units per year. The new all fiberglass bodied Dodge Motor Homes, which were available in 21 and 27-foot models, took the RV industry by storm. Part of their success was due to the fact that the units were unique enough to be sold not only by established trailer dealers but by franchised car and truck dealers as well. They were also considerably more affordable than the custom units available from most other manufacturers.

Innovative and unusual features in the Dodge Motor Home included a couch that could be converted into a double bunk bed with the back of the couch suspended from the ceiling by heavy straps to form the upper bunk, a double basin, stainless-steel sink, and windshield enclosing drapery for privacy.

The demand for the relatively inexpensive motor home continued to grow rapidly with many other manufacturers joining in the production but, by the 1966-67 period, it was still generally accepted that there were more Dodge motor homes registered on the road in the United States than all other brands of motorized RVs combined.

In 1967, Frank Motor Home Corporation was sold to PRF Industries and it became the Travco Division of PRF. From this date on, the coaches were identified as Travco motor homes or as Dodge-Travco motor homes. In 1979, Travco Division was sold by PRF and became a part of Clarence Fore’s Foretravel, Inc., which coincidentally, like Frank’s company, had grown from a single coach privately made and intended for personal use.

Having sold his Dodge Motor Home operation, Frank continued to innovate and improve products in the RV industry.
Because he felt that many American consumers wanted a new smaller, more compact motor home that would be easier to drive, easier to park, and comparatively easier to buy, Ray developed the Xplorer brand of van-based motor home. Production of the first Frank Industries “van campers” began in 1968 with a fully self-contained model that would fit in any standard sized residential single garage. This innovation again caught the industry’s imagination and again established Ray Frank as an innovative industry leader with what was the first production “Type B” motorhome.

Having designed his first motor home to be a totally original vehicle from the ground up and neither a modification of an existing truck or conversion of a highway coach, Frank’s design and its overwhelming success set the ground work for the entire “type A” motor home industry of today, as well as lending its identity to an entire, still growing, lifestyle.

His production of van-based Mini motorhomes, which at the time had been done only on the German built and underpowered Volkswagen “microbus”, lead to the successful development of an entirely separate portion of today’s RV industry.

When his many interior appointment creations are considered in addition to two primary recreational vehicle types, it becomes clear that Ray Frank can truly be identified as the “Father of the Motorhome”.

For his many invaluable contributions to the creation and growth of the modern motor home industry, Ray Frank was inducted into the RV/MH Hall of Fame as a member of the class of 1978.


Take a minute to visit the RV/MH Hall of Fame and museum and library website. If your RV travels ever take you close to Elkhart Indiana make it a point to stop and visit. The address is RV/MH Hall of Fame, 21565 Executive Parkway, Elkhart Indiana 46514.
Today I want to discuss some very effective methods to help protect your RV water system when you are camping. Excessive water pressure at the campground can damage your RV drinking hose and if it is too high it can damage the internal plumbing in your RV.

The good news is Valterra Products complete line of standard and lead-free water regulators offer affordable and practical solutions to prevent this from happening to you.

In some cases water pressure at campgrounds can exceed the pressure that your RV plumbing components and equipment are rated to withstand. This problem can easily be avoided by purchasing and using a water regulator every time you go camping. Consider it an essential tool in your RV toolbox.

I would like to demonstrate all of the options you have when it comes to RV water regulators. Watch Video
RV Refrigerator Efficiency

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