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National and State Parks Adopting Little Kampers

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1lb LP tank exchange proven to reduce hazardous propane tank waste in parks

MANTECA, Calif., Jan. 20, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- **In meetings large and small, held outside and over video conferences, the people who operate national and state parks have been talking trash. As in, garbage. There is plenty to discuss. And some of it is actually hazardous waste.**



Little Kamper tanks in the Yosemite Village Store in Yosemite National Park.

Used 1 pound propane tanks are a big problem.

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Used propane tanks are a big problem. Car campers discard thousands of the dark green 1lb steel propane tanks used to fuel portable stoves, BBQ's and lanterns. The used tanks are hazardous waste which makes them costly to handle and recycle. This year, in an effort to reduce tank waste and save money, campground stores will offer a sustainable alternative to the disposable tanks. What started in Yosemite National Park will now be available in campground stores from Arizona to Montana and not a moment too soon.

"Yosemite Hospitality is proud to be the first park concessioner to partner with Little Kamper, said Weston Spiegl, vice president of operations for Yosemite Hospitality. "We offer Little Kamper's refillable/portable propane cylinder used by campers at the Village Store and seven other retail locations in Yosemite. Yosemite Hospitality continues to look for ways to support waste reduction at Yosemite National Park, and we are proud to have this product available for park visitors to make a difference in effort to reduce waste."

The program was brought in as a test in 2020 and after two summer seasons, the proof is in the numbers. Little Kamper tanks are rarely discarded in Yosemite.

"When we first spoke with the Yosemite waste stream stakeholders about 1lb propane tanks," explained Josh Simpson of Little Kamper propane, "we heard about safety concerns, environmental problems and the financial impact of tank collection and recycling. Everyone was ready for a new solution, but there was not a lot of hard data to describe the problem. Now we have real data."

The real data comes from a meticulous 2021 audit of the Yosemite fuel cylinder waste stream. Volunteers gathered on a series of Saturday mornings from February 2021 to January 2022 to sort every one of the propane, butane, and isobutane cylinders that had been left in Yosemite National Park. The volunteers separated the tanks by type and by manufacturer so that real numbers could

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"People who purchase a Little Kamper tank rarely throw them away because the purchase price discourages that choice," offered Simpson. "Over 1,200 Little Kampers were sold in Yosemite National Park in 2021 and only 22 of them were recovered in the waste stream audit. That's a factual data point and it clearly shows the waste-reduction benefits of our exchange program."

That explains why what started with Aramark in Yosemite will now expand to other national and state Parks. Global hospitality company Delaware North will bring the Little Kamper program into its national park retail operations at Grand Canyon, Sequoia & Kings Canyon, and possibly Shenandoah National Parks.

"Delaware North looks forward to offering Little Kamper's reusable propane canister at our retail shops in several parks this season," said Deb Friedel, director of sustainability for Delaware North. "We know that national park visitors will appreciate the opportunity to reduce waste in the parks by using a convenient and effective product that is also sustainable."

Aramark is expanding their Little Kamper program to reduce waste at Lake Powell and Crater Lake National Park. State park campground operators in California will sell and exchange Little Kamper tanks in campgrounds from the Pacific Coast to the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The bright green Little Kamper tanks will gradually become common on campground picnic tables, without making a significant impact in the campground waste stream.

Reducing propane tank waste is now a realistic goal, and it starts when Little Kamper tank exchange is available in popular destinations like Yosemite and the Grand Canyon. Campground concessionaires expect that visitors who prefer eco-friendly products will see the Little Kamper tank exchange program as a helpful way to reduce waste.

With more consumers looking for sustainable products and more people visiting national and state parks with a desire to recreate outdoors, the Little Kamper appears to be arriving right on time.



Fuel cylinder waste from Yosemite National Park in September 2021



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