



Special Uses—Applying for a Permit

Commercial Recreation Activities

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING RECREATION EVENTS ON NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS

The Forest Service authorizes a number of recreational activities on National Forest System (NFS) lands. The following set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) will help you determine whether your proposal would be considered a recreation event. Compare these FAQs with those listed under [Noncommercial Group Uses](#).

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What are recreation events and who needs a permit?

Recreation events are commercial activities requiring temporary, authorized use of NFS land. Examples of recreation events include, but are not limited to, animal, bicycle, motocross, or triathlon races; jeep rallies; dog trials; fishing contests; rendezvous; rodeos; adventure games; youth treks; wagon trains; concerts; and other similar events. A permit is required for these type of events, regardless of the number of people involved in the activity.

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What is a commercial use or activity?

A commercial use or activity on NFS land occurs when

- An applicant intends to charge an entry or participation fee, or
- The primary purpose is the sale of a good or service, regardless of the intent to produce a profit.

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How do I apply?

Form

[SPECIAL-USE APPLICATION & PERMIT FOR RECREATION EVENTS FS-2700-3c \(RTF\)](#)

Link to a Local Office

Note: All proposals for the use of the National Forest under a [Special-Use authorization](#) require a pre-application meeting.

[Find a link to a national forest or grassland by state or name.](#)

Regulations

Complete regulations on special use permits on national forests are published at 36 CFR 251. View and search on-line for the specific CFR at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) Main Page](#).

To begin the process, you are required to contact the Forest Service office in the area where you wish to have your activity before you have worked out the details. This contact will determine whether your activity meets the following pre-application screening requirements applicable to all special uses:

- The proposed use is consistent with federal, state, and local laws, regulations, orders, and policies that apply to national forests and grasslands;
- The proposed use is consistent or can be made consistent with the Forest Plan that established standards and guidelines for management of the land where the activity will take place;
- The proposed use will not create a serious and substantial risk to public health or safety;
- The proposed use will not create an exclusive or perpetual right of use or occupancy;
- The proposed use will not unreasonably conflict or interfere with administrative use by the Forest Service, other authorized existing uses, or uses of adjacent non-NFS lands;
- The proponent must not owe any fees to the Forest Service from a prior or existing special-use authorization;
- The proposed use does not involve gambling or providing of sexually-oriented commercial services, even if permitted under state law;
- The proposed use does not involve military or paramilitary training or exercises, unless such training is federally funded;
- The proposed use does not involve disposal of solid waste or disposal of radioactive or other hazardous substances.

If you meet the initial screening requirements, the Forest Service administrator will provide guidance on what information will be required to complete your application. If your proposed event does not meet the screening requirements you will be notified that the proposal, as submitted, is denied.

A proposal that passes the initial screening proceeds to second level screening. Your proposal will be accepted as an application if it meets all of the following:

1. The proposed use would be consistent or compatible with the purposes for which the lands are managed; and
2. The proposed use would be in the public interest; and
3. The proponent is qualified; and
4. The proponent can demonstrate technical or financial capability to undertake the use and fully comply with the terms and conditions of the permit; and
5. There is someone authorized by the proponent to sign a permit or there is someone willing to accept the responsibility of the terms and conditions of the permit. Upon satisfactory passing of this screen the Forest Service will process your request.

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Is a fee required?

Yes, land use rental fees are required and there are two ways to determine the fees:

- Five percent of adjusted gross receipts for one time events and 3 percent of adjusted gross receipts for multiple events under a single permit; or
- Using the minimum fees for recreation events that have been established, but may vary, by National Forest.

There may be other costs for which you are responsible as part of your authorized activity. Liability insurance coverage and a performance bond to ensure protection of the environment and site cleanup may be required. Depending on the size and duration of your activity, costs associated with law enforcement, crowd control, safety issues, and sanitation may also be required.

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