



Request for Proposals

Outfitting and Guiding on the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River
Andrew Pickens Ranger District, Sumter National Forest



Providing recreation services and facilities is a key part of the Forest Service's mission. To fulfill this responsibility, the agency relies upon volunteer, organizational, and commercial partners. Partners help provide an expanded scope of opportunities for people by contributing unique skills, knowledge, equipment, financial resources, and technical capabilities. Although some visitors possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and equipment to enjoy national forests, others may not have the capability to participate in an activity on their own. By permitting commercial services to operate on the Sumter National Forest, this need can be met. Outfitter and Guide services offer opportunities for the recreating public to experience the dynamic landscape of the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River on the Sumter National Forest. Outfitters and guides can include commercial businesses, nonprofit organizations, community organizations, and educational institutions, and they facilitate recreational experiences for individuals or groups by providing services, education, training, and/or equipment on national forest lands.

The Andrew Pickens Ranger District of the Sumter National Forest is seeking proposals from businesses, individuals, or organizations wishing to offer outfitting and guiding services within the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River Corridor.

Services that will be considered include:

- **Guided inflatable raft trips.**
- **Guided hard boat trips and clinics.**
- **River shuttle services**

Services proposed must meet all criteria outlined in the submission form.

The purpose of this public notice is to determine whether or not sufficient competitive interest exists that would warrant issuance of a prospectus. If a prospectus were issued, the Forest Service would review proposals through a competitive bid process and issue a limited number of priority use outfitting and guiding permits under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

Special use permits will be limited to existing use levels as indicated in the *2004 Sumter National Forest -Revised Land and Resource Management Plan*. Special use permits issued in response to this request will be subject to environmental review and public scoping under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

This document is not intended as a formal offering for the award of any legal authorization or for participation in future solicitation.

Proposal Requirements

Information Requests:	Submission Format:	Submission Criteria:
<p>Interested respondents may submit questions by email to:</p> <p>sm.fs.r8fmsapcom@usda.gov</p> <p>For specific questions about outfitting and guiding opportunities on the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forest, proponents should contact:</p> <p>Howard Morrison at 864-638-4463.</p> <p>For general information on special use permits with the Forest Service, proponents should visit the USFS Special Uses website at:</p> <p>https://www.fs.usda.gov/specialuses/</p>	<p>The Forest Service asks interested parties to submit their proposal either hard copy or electronic file.</p> <p>The electronic file must be in a Microsoft Office program or a PDF file and emailed to:</p> <p>sm.fs.r8fmsapcom@usda.gov</p> <p>Please mail or hand deliver hard copy proposals by 4:00 pm EST on August 5, 2023, to:</p> <p>Francis Marion and Sumter National Forest Andrew Pickens Ranger District Attn: Howard Morrison 112 Andrew Pickens Circle Mountain Rest, SC 29664</p>	<p>Please provide the following in your proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A cover letter expressing your interests in this opportunity.• Proposed Activity a complete description of the proposal utilizing the submission form attached.

If a permit is issued, a fee will likely be charged. The fee is generally for items such as: covering the costs for administering the permit, assigned site fees, and annual fees for the permit (generally 3% of gross revenue).

The Forest reserves the right, to withdraw the request for proposal and/or not issue any related or other request for proposals and retain use of the ideas or materials submitted in any manner deemed to be in the best interest of the Forest Service. The Forest Service likewise reserves the right, at any time, to change any components, concepts, or approaches of the request for proposal. All costs associated with responding to the request for proposal are the sole responsibility of the proponent and any such costs shall not be reimbursed by the Forest Service.

Forest Service will not return materials submitted in connection with this request for proposal. All materials submitted in response to this request shall become the property of the Forest Service. Any page with proprietary or confidential information must be noted with a disclaimer, however applicants should be aware that proposals are broadly subject to public disclosure pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (5 USC § 552).





Forest Service

United States Department of Agriculture

June 2023

Chattooga Wild and Scenic River Outfitting and Guiding Proposal Form

Andrew Pickens Ranger District, Sumter National Forest

Prior to further consideration, all special use proposals must first be screened using the criteria listed in 36 CFR 251.54, the First Level of which can be found at the end of this proposal form. Second-Level screening criteria can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations as provided above.

Proponent Information:

Proponent Name: _____ Business Name: _____

Proponent's Address: _____

State & Zip Code: _____

Business Phone: _____ Mobile Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____ Website: _____

Please provide a statement of your technical experience and financial capability to offer the proposed activity. *(Please provide this in the form of a cover letter).*

Proposed Activity:

1. **Proposed Activity Description:** This should be a brief description of the services you are proposing to provide.

- Services that will be offered to clients (including any services that will be provided by a party other than the holder).
- Location of routes, starting and ending points, and other use areas for the proposed operations (include a detailed map showing these).
- A list of proposed transport and/or access methods.
- A list of government facilities you propose to use, e.g., a parking lot or trailhead.
- A list of temporary improvements or signs that you propose to use.
- A description of cleanup and restoration during and after the proposed operations.

2. The number of service days requested, including anticipated number of trips and average party size, including guides (*service day = 1 client x 1 day [or portion of the day]*). Indicate standard and maximum guide to client ratios.
3. Date range of proposed operations (i.e., December through April). *If desired, the attached Estimated Use Itinerary can be completed to address items 2 & 3; please indicate ideal operations under optimal conditions.*
4. A description of your client base or audience. *Please indicate if your audience will include underserved populations, youth, or provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities.*
5. An overview of your proposed fees and charges for your services.
6. A statement as to why your proposed activity is dependent on National Forest lands and cannot occur on privately owned or other lands.

Prior to further consideration, all special use proposals must first be screened using the criteria listed in 36 CFR 251.54, the First Level of which is listed below.

First Level (Initial) Special Uses Screening: Proposal must meet **ALL** of the following minimum requirements, otherwise, proposal will be rejected. Screening table for official use only.

Criteria	Meets
Use consistent with laws, regulations, orders, and policies establishing or governing National Forest System lands; other federal laws; and applicable State and local health and sanitation laws.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use consistent or can be made consistent with standards and guidelines in applicable Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. (If proposal is inconsistent with the Forest Plan, discuss ways it could be altered to make it consistent, such as conducting the activity at a different time or location.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use will not pose a serious or substantial risk to public health or safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use will not create an exclusive or perpetual right of use or occupancy. (Use would not in effect grant title (or create the appearance of) to Federal land, such as cemeteries, monuments, or other memorials, or some major capital improvements by municipal entities).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use will not unreasonably conflict or interfere with administrative use by the Forest Service, other scheduled or authorized existing uses on or adjacent to non-National Forest System lands.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proponent does not have any delinquent debt owed to the Forest Service under terms and conditions of a prior or existing authorization, unless such debt results from a decision on an administrative appeal or from a fee review and the proponent is current with the payment schedule.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use does not involve gambling or providing of sexually oriented commercial services, even if permitted under State law.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use does not include military or paramilitary training or exercises by private organizations or individuals, unless such training or exercises are federally funded.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use does not involve disposal of solid waste or disposal of radioactive or other hazardous substances.	<input type="checkbox"/>

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found [online](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) at (http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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