

What is a Special Use, and do I need an authorization?

All uses of National Forest System lands, improvements, and resources, except the disposal of timber and minerals, the grazing of livestock, and noncommercial recreational activities such as camping, picnicking, hiking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, and boating, as well as noncommercial activities involving the expression of views such as assemblies, meetings, demonstrations, and parades by groups of 74 or less are designated "Special Uses." Noncommercial means no entry fee or remuneration is required to participate; it does not mean not-for-profit. All Special Uses require an authorization.

Here is a link to the Special Uses website at our agency headquarters:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/specialuses/>

Here's how to apply for authorization to use the lands of the Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests.

Complete and return the proposal form (K:\gmfl\2000\2700SpecialUseManagement\2700SpecialUseManagement\Forms\Proposal Package\GMFL_proposal_worksheet.doc). Include a map that clearly shows the location of the entire project, property lines, and key features of the area. Show existing roads in the project area. **Please explain why the project must be done on National Forest System lands.**

The proposal will be screened against two levels of criteria to determine its suitability for NFS land and your technical and financial ability to construct, operate, maintain, and remove your proposed use, and restore the NFS land to its pre-existing condition. The result of the screening will be a decision by the authorized officer to accept the proposal, to deny the proposal outright as an inappropriate use of the National Forest, or to deny the use with suggestions on how it might be modified to be acceptable.

If the proposal is accepted, the appropriate application form will be sent to you.

The completed application must go through an environmental assessment. We start this process twice per year by bringing all new projects to the assembled resource specialists in what we call Small Projects Day. These are held in the fall and in the spring. These specialists (representing wildlife and fish biology, soils science, hydrology, engineering, landscape architecture, archaeology, recreation management, and so on) determine the effects your project will have on their resource. Some may already have the necessary information in their files; others may need to plan a field visit. Projects that involve disturbing soil, such as road construction or maintenance, usually require a site visit from our botanist during growing season. This requirement normally sets the schedule for the field work on your project.

You will be charged Cost Recovery fees for the processing of your application. These fees are based on our estimate of the time our specialists need to determine the effects of your project on the environment.

We will not send the bill for the Cost Recovery fees until we can do the work needed to complete the environmental review and make a decision on your project.

The decision to approve or disapprove your application is made through the environmental review process. Environmental factors may be discovered that preclude the approval of your request. In other cases, your project may need significant modification to meet environmental constraints documented in the environmental review. **Payment of Cost Recovery fees is required, but is no guarantee the application will be approved.**

If the decision is made to approve the project, the authorization is prepared.

Annual rent will be charged. These rents are revised periodically, adjusted annually for inflation, and are subject to minimum fees set by our national or regional headquarters. For rents less than \$100 per year, we will charge a consolidated fee for 5 years or the term of the permit if that is shorter. You will be billed for the initial rent when we send you the permit to sign. Some uses require you to obtain insurance that names the United States as an additional insured. Upon confirmation that the rent is paid and any insurance requirements are met, the permit will be executed by the authorized officer. A copy will be sent to you.

If your project involves significant construction or other activities that must be monitored during implementation, additional Cost Recovery fees to cover that expense will be charged.

These must be paid prior to the start of such activities. Some projects may also require a bond or cash in lieu thereof to cover construction or operation.

When the authorized project is up and running, it must be inspected on a schedule determined by the type of use. Some uses such as power lines are inspected annually. Others are biennially or triennially over the life of the authorization.

Who do I contact, and how?

For Recreation events and outfitting and guiding, contact Jen Edmonds at jedmonds@fs.fed.us or (802) 767-4261 ext. 529.

For Non-recreation uses, contact Dave Bosch at dbosch@fs.fed.us or (802) 747-6746.

Completed Proposal Forms can be e-mailed to them or mailed to either of them at Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests, 231 North Main Street, Rutland, Vermont 05701.

District Rangers and their staffs at our offices in Middlebury, Rochester, and Manchester Depot, Vermont, and in Hector, New York, can also be contacted.