



Santa Fe National Forest
Special-Use Authorization Pre-Application Information
Revised 8/7/2012

Introduction

Welcome to the Santa Fe National Forest and thank you for inquiring about using National Forest System lands. Santa Fe National Forest staff receive hundreds of public requests each year to use the forest for various commercial, non-commercial, filming, and other activities. Before any of these activities can take place on National Forest System lands a Special-Use Permit (SUP) must be obtained. The general information provided in this information packet is intended to familiarize the public with the SUP process.

A SUP is not required for personal or family recreational activities, such as camping, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, hunting, and horseback riding; with the exception of group sizes of 75 or more.

If you are interested in obtaining a SUP please read the enclosed brochure information, titled “Obtaining a Special-Use Permit with the Forest Service”. The Forest Service is not required to process and approve every SUP application. Some proposals cause too great an impact on forest resources or are not consistent with the Santa Fe National Forest Plan (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe/projects/plansReports/index.html>) and therefore are not processed.

To learn more about SUP’s please go to the Forest Service website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/specialuses/index.shtml>. All requests for a SUP begin as a “proposal. Please note that the proposal becomes an application only after it meets all screening criteria and fees, if required, are paid with the application.

Preliminary Screening Criteria

Please pay close attention to the ‘appropriateness of you proposal’ criteria when considering whether to apply for a SUP. Your proposal can only be accepted and processed if it meets all of the screening criteria. One of the more common issues arises when determining whether the activity can be accomplished on non-forest land. If the proposed use of National Forest System lands does not meet the screening criteria it cannot be processed. Upon successful clearance of the screening criteria and receiving process fees, if required, the proposal becomes an application. Proposal rejections are not appealable.

Application Review and Processing Time

Processing a complete application involves review of the proposed activity by resource specialists to determine if physical, biological, social, or cultural resource impacts to the forest would occur as a result of a proposed activity per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Resource impacts may be effectively mitigated through terms and conditions, operating plans, or other attachments to the appropriate SUP authorization. If resource impacts are too great and cannot be mitigated the application will be denied. Application rejections are

appealable. In addition to on-the-ground resource considerations, the application will be reviewed administratively to determine what level of environmental analysis is required.

It is important to understand that in order to process a complete application takes minimum of six (6) weeks to several months, so allow plenty of lead time before the proposed activity. Incomplete applications or applications without sufficient detail, including location maps with topography, will not be processed. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide all the necessary information for consideration of a request. Be sure that the name on the application is the legal entity requesting activity and that person signing the application has authority to sign on behalf of the entity.

Processing Costs from You

Applicants are required to reimburse the United States Government in advance for the cost of processing, including environmental review and NEPA compliance, a SUP application. Processing fees will be estimated during the initial review of a complete application. Please be aware that paying process fees does not guarantee that an application will be approved, and that fees are not refundable. The level of NEPA analysis required is based on the complexity of the application. More complex applications will usually have higher processing fees due to the amount of time needed for analysis. The final fee will include all aspects of evaluating, environmental compliance and monitoring the activity.

In addition to the processing fee for the SUP annual land use fees associated with the use may be assessed.

Contacts

The Ranger District where the activity is proposed will normally process your application. If more than one district will be used, the district where most of the use will take place will be the administering district. Ranger District contact information is listed below for your convenience. Please contact one of the following ranger districts:

Coyote Ranger District

HC 78 Box 1
Coyote, NM 87013
Phone (575) 638-5526

Cuba Ranger District

PO Box 130
Cuba, NM 87013
Phone (575) 289-3264

Espanola Ranger District

1710 N. Riverside Dr.
Espanola, NM 87532
Phone (505)753-7331

Jemez Ranger District

PO Box 150
Jemez Springs, NM 87025
Phone (575) 829-3535

Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District

Las Vegas Ranger Station
1926 N. 7th Street
Las Vegas, NM 87701
Phone (505) 425-3534

Pecos Ranger Station

PO Drawer 429
Pecos, NM 87552
Phone (505) 757-6121

Obtaining a Special-Use Authorization with the Forest Service

The Application Process



U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service

Forest Service Special-Uses Program

The Forest Service manages over 192 million acres of national forests and grasslands that comprise the National Forest System (NFS). Today, our growing population and mobile society have created a demand for a variety of uses of these federal lands. Often these diverse needs require specific approval. The Forest Service provides services that support our national policy and federal land laws. The Agency's special-uses program authorizes uses on NFS land that provide a benefit to the general public and protect public and natural resources values. Currently there are over 74,000 authorizations on the NFS lands for over 180 types of uses.

Each year, the Forest Service receives thousands of individual and business applications for authorization for use of NFS land for such activities as water transmission, agriculture, outfitting and guiding, recreation, telecommunication, research, photography and video productions, and granting road and utility rights-of-ways. The Forest Service carefully reviews each application to determine how the request affects the public's use of NFS land. Normally, NFS land is not made available if the overall needs of the individual or business can be met on nonfederal lands.

What are special-use authorizations?

A special-use authorization is a legal document such as a permit, term permit, lease, or easement, which allows occupancy, use, rights, or privileges of NFS land. The authorization is granted for a specific use of the land for a specific period of time.

When do I need an authorization?

1. If you will need to occupy, use, or build on NFS land for personal or business purposes, whether the duration is temporary or long term.
2. If there is a fee being charged or if income is derived from the use.

3. If an activity on NFS land involves individuals or organization with 75 or more participants or spectators.

Is my proposal appropriate?

1. Your request must be consistent with laws, regulations, orders, policies of NFS lands, other federal laws, and applicable State and local health and sanitation laws.
2. Your request must be consistent or made consistent with the standards and guidelines in the applicable Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.
3. Your request must not pose serious or substantial risk to public health or safety.
4. Your request must not require exclusive or perpetual right of use or occupancy.
5. Your request does not unreasonably conflict or interfere with administrative uses, other scheduled or authorized existing uses, or use of adjacent non-NFS lands.
6. The proponent must not owe any fees to the Forest Service from a prior or existing special-use authorization.
7. No gambling or providing of sexually oriented commercial services can be authorized on NFS land, even if permitted under state law.
8. No military or paramilitary training or exercises by private organizations or individuals can be authorized on NFS land, unless it is federally funded.
9. No disposal of solid waste or storage or disposal of radioactive or other hazardous substances can be authorized on NFS land.

How do I apply?

1. Prior to submitting a proposal, you are required to arrange a meeting at the local Forest Service district office where the use is being requested. A staff member will discuss your proposal, potential land use conflicts, procedures and qualifications, probable time frames, fees, bonding requirements, additional coordination with other agencies, environmental reports, and field reviews.
2. Submit a proposal to the local Forest Service district office where the activity is proposed to occur. If the activity would occur on multiple districts submit the proposal to the district office where the majority of the activity would occur.
3. If your proposal passes the initial screening criteria you may submit an application. Application information is also available on the special uses home page at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/permits>. The application will not be considered complete until all information has been submitted to the Forest Service district office and fees, if required, have been paid.
4. Most commercial uses require additional information with the application. You may need business plans, operating plans, liability insurance, licenses/registrations, or other documents.

A commercial use is when an applicant intends to make use of NFS lands for business or financial gain.

How do I answer all the questions?

Name and Address - Include the full name(s) to be used. If the application includes real property, the name(s) on the legal document must match the application.

Applicant's Agent - This person must be at least 21 years old and may or may not be the same as the applicant. Documentation should be included to verify that this person may sign on behalf of the applicant.

Project Description - Include enough detail to enable the Forest Service to determine feasibility, environmental impacts, benefits to the public, the safety of the request, lands to be occupied or used, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Environmental Protection Plan - Include proposed plans for environmental protection and rehabilitation during construction, maintenance, removal, and reclamation of the land.

Map - Provide a detailed map (U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle or equivalent) or plat (survey or equivalent) showing the requested use in relation to NFS land, identification of applicant's property (if applicable), scale, map legend, legal description, and a north arrow.

Technical and Financial Capability - Provide documentation to assure the Forest Service you are capable of constructing, operating, maintaining, removing the use of NFS land, and reclaiming the land after the authorization terminates.

Alternatives - You must first consider using nonfederal land. Lower costs or fewer restrictions are not adequate reasons for use of NFS lands. Provide alternative locations for the proposal in your application.

What does an authorization cost?

Cost Recovery Fees – An assessment of fees to recover agency processing costs for special use applications and monitoring costs for special use authorizations. These fees are separate from any fees charged for the use and occupancy of NFS lands.

Land Use Fees - This is an annual rental fee based on the fair market value for the uses authorized and is payable in advance. Fees are established by appraisal or other sound business management principles.

Other Associated Costs - You may be responsible for providing information and reports necessary to determine the feasibility and environmental impacts of your proposal; compliance with applicable laws and regulations; and terms and conditions to be included in the authorization.

Your local Forest Service office:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice or TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.