



Forest Special Use Permits

Permit Information

The Forest Service authorizes (permits) the private use of National Forest land for a variety of activities, including recreation events, non-commercial groups such as weddings, commercial filming and photography, recreation cabins, ski areas, resorts, outfitter guide services such as pack stations, communication sites, etc.

Depending on the complexity of the proposal, obtaining a Special Use Permit can sometimes be a lengthy process.

Please coordinate early with the ranger district where you would like to operate. (It is important to note all proponents will not receive a permit, therefore any action taken before receiving a Special Use authorization, such as occupying National Forest System Lands and advertising or expending funds, is premature and at the proponent's risk--and may be against the law.)

For information regarding the administration of existing special use permits or obtaining a new special use permit, please call the special uses staff. For general information visit our [National Special Uses website](#).

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.
- Money collected may cover expense categories, such as food, transportation, prizes, advertising, purchase replacement of equipment, or compensation for the leader of the activity.
- Use is considered noncommercial if the fees charged are used only for the purpose of paying for actual expenses directly related to operating or staging the activity, with any excess funds returned to participants. The fees charged should not include costs for employees or personnel who stage or run the event.
- Recreation events are commercial activities requiring temporary, authorized use of NFS land. Examples of recreation events include, but are not limited to, swimming, running, boating or bicycle races; jeep rallies; fishing contests; adventure games; youth treks; and other similar events. A permit is required for these type of events, regardless of the number of people involved in the activity.

If you are interested in learning more about submitting a proposal for a recreation event, please contact your local special uses permit administrator and submit a [SF-2700-3c application form](#).

Commercial Filming and Photography

National forests are a popular location for the commercial filming and still photography industries. Anyone wishing to film on National Forest System lands must obtain a special use permit from the Forest Service. The Region 5 [“Commercial Filming and Photography”](#) webpage addresses many common questions concerning the permitting process.

To request a filming permit on the Stanislaus National Forest please fill out the **Permit Request** form and submit to the local permit administrator or assistant on the Ranger District in which you wish to film.

Recreation Residence Program

The Term Permit Act of 1915 authorized the ownership and seasonal use of private cabins on the National Forest. We currently have 534 recreation residences managed under special use permits on the High Sierra Ranger District. This page contains documents that may be of use to holders of recreation residence special use permits. If you have any questions about this program or the resources on this webpage, please contact your permit administrator.

[Recreation Residence Program](#)

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