



Flathead National Forest Process and Guidelines for Temporary Outfitting and Guiding and Recreation Event Special Use Permits

The Forest Service permits appropriate recreation special uses that serve the public, promote public health and safety, and protect the environment. Outfitters and guides and other recreation events support the forest Service mission by providing a quality recreation experience and connection with nature. They provide access to public lands, technical expertise, responsible recreation education, and forest rules and regulations.

The Flathead National Forest (FNF) has a process and guidelines for issuing Temporary Outfitting and Guiding Special Use Permits and Recreation Event Special Use Permits. This is pursuant to the governing directives contained in Forest Service Manuals 2700 and 2300, and at Forest Service Handbooks 2709.11 and 2709.14. A copy of the governing directives may be viewed at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/specialuses/>

The process and guidelines include two “open seasons” for accepting applications. The open seasons help managers effectively plan for proposals and respond to requests twice a year.

Application Process

Applications for both Temporary Outfitter and Guide Permits and Recreation Event Permits will be accepted bi-annually during the following “open seasons”:

UPDATED IN 2023. Summer Open Season: November 1 to December 31 for activities proposed to take place from May 1 to October 31

The FNF will notify proponent of one of the following decisions by February 15:

- Application is accepted
- Application is not accepted
- Application needs modification (for instance, changes to dates or locations)

Winter Open Season: July 1 to August 31 for activities proposed to take place from November 1 to April 30

The FNF will notify proponent of one of the following decisions by October 15:

- Application is accepted
- Application is not accepted
- Application needs modification

Consideration of any application for use in a specific area or for a specific activity or season is at the sole discretion of the District Ranger of each administrative unit of the FNF. All applications that are submitted must meet both the initial and second-level screening criteria established in 36 CFR 261.54.



With limited exceptions, only complete application packages submitted by the deadline dates listed below will be considered. Applications for Temporary Outfitter and Guide Permits must use form FS 2700-3f, and applications for Recreation Event Permits must use form FS 2700-3c. Please include a digital map of the proposed route or location of activity (instructions are available on Google Earth). Other digital mapping programs are available and accepted.

Who May Apply?

Applicants for either a Temporary Outfitter and Guide Permit or a Recreation Event Permit must provide proof of adequate insurance and demonstrate they have the technical and financial ability to conduct the activity proposed.

Temporary Outfitter and Guide Permits are authorizations for a commercial use or activity that allows specified, short-term, non-renewable recreational use of National Forest System (NFS) lands.

- Temporary Outfitter and Guide Permits are authorized in increments of 50 service days, up to a maximum of 200 service days for use within a 180-day period, per holder, per use area (FSH 2709.14, 53.1k).
- Temporary Outfitter and Guide Permits are intended for use that is non-recurring and not intended for building a business.
- Liability insurance naming the United States Forest Service as additional insured is required (FSM 2713.1 lists coverage amounts).
- Applications for Temporary Outfitter and Guide Permits will generally NOT be considered for activities that involve hunting or fishing.
- Applications for Temporary Outfitter and Guide Permits in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex are subject to the process and guidelines established under the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex Management Plan.
- Fees for Temporary Outfitter and Guide Permits are based on the flat fee rates for a block of use issued in 50 service day increments (FSH 2709.11, 37.21b). Fees are as follows:

Number of service days	Flat fee
1 to 50	\$150
51 to 100	\$300
101 to 150	\$450
151 to 200	\$600

Fees for unused service days are not refundable. In general, fees for temporary permits may not be waived. There may be exceptions, such as permits for accredited schools (universities, colleges, etc.) for bona fide course work.

Recreation Event Permits are authorizations for organized events of a temporary nature (such as races, fun runs, etc.), occurring on National Forest System land.



- Permit holders must provide appropriate liability insurance (FSM 2713.3), law enforcement, crowd control, traffic control, safety, and sanitation for their event.
- Applications for Recreation Event Permits in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex will NOT be considered.
- Fees for Recreation Event Permits are 5 percent of adjusted gross receipts for one-time events and 3 percent for multiple events under a single permit. The minimum fee for Forest Service Region 1 is \$87 in calendar year 2023.

Applications for both Temporary Outfitter and Guide Permits and Recreation Event Permits *generally* **WILL NOT** be accepted or considered for the following types of activities or for the following locations:

- The Mission Mountains Wilderness or the Jewel Basin Recommended Wilderness Area
- The Three Forks of the Flathead Wild and Scenic River (floating/rafting)
- Use of cave resources
- High-risk activities
- Use in areas with seasonal restrictions (i.e., for spring grizzly bear emergence)

Cost Recovery

Under cost recovery regulations, the Proponent may be required to pay full actual or reasonable costs associated with preparing, processing, and administering the proposed authorization if the estimated work will exceed 50 hours; including but not limited to considering the following:

- ✓ Evaluating the proposal under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, Public Law 91-190, 1/1/70); the Endangered Species Act (ESA, Public Law 93- 205, 12/28/73); and/or other applicable laws, regulations, or policies.
- ✓ Conduct, assist the Forest Service, and/or pay for required public involvement.
- ✓ Compensate the Forest Service (via an approved collection agreement) for employee wages, overtime, vehicle mileage, overhead costs, and/or other expenditures associated with administration of the proposed authorization.



Ranger District Contacts

Please direct questions and submit email applications to the Ranger District contacts that correspond with the proposed activity location.

Ranger district	Contact	Phone number	Email address
Swan Lake	Anthony Butterfield	406-837-7507	anthony.butterfield@usda.gov
Spotted Bear	Jeremy Rust	406-897-0606	jeremy.rust@usda.gov
Hungry Horse-Glacier View	Sean Cranmer	406-387-3814	sean.m.cranmer@usda.gov
Tally Lake	Derrick Mercer	406-758-3546	derrick.mercer@usda.gov

Definitions

Commercial Use. Commercial use is defined as recreational use of the NFS lands for business or financial gain (a) where an entry or participation fee is charged or (b) where the primary purpose is the sale of a good or service. A permit is required in either case regardless of whether the intent is to produce a profit. Financial gain includes gratuities, donations, gifts, bartering, etc.

Guiding. Providing services or assistance (such as supervision, protection, education, training, packing, touring, subsistence, transporting people, or interpretation) for a fee or other gain to individuals or groups on NFS lands. The term "guide" includes the holder's employees and agents.

Outfitting. Renting on or delivering to NFS lands for a fee or other gain any saddle or pack animal, vehicle, boat, camping gear, or similar supplies or equipment. The term "outfitter" includes the holder's employees and agents.

Service Day. An allocation of use constituting a day or any part of a day on NFS lands for which an outfitter or guide provides services to a client. The total number of service days is calculated by multiplying each service day by the number of clients on the trip

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