



# CHRISTMAS TREE PERMIT HELPFUL TIPS

## Rio Grande National Forest

This permit allows you to cut a Christmas Tree within designated areas of the Rio Grande National Forest! Lifelong memories are built during these special times, and we are happy to help with any information gathering you'll need to make this trip a safe and enjoyable one.

If you are interested in cutting a tree on BLM lands, please obtain a permit from the San Luis Valley BLM Office (719) 852-7074.

Please be sure to read and adhere to all the tips and guidelines when selecting your tree.



### Where to Cut Your Tree

- The removal of Christmas Trees from the Rio Grande National Forest is forest wide.
- Do not cut in active timber sales or areas that have been planted with new trees.
- Do not cut trees within all designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, special recreation areas, or research natural areas.
- Do not cut trees within 100 feet of campgrounds, private lands, and administrative sites.
- Do not cut trees within 100 feet of county roads or state or federal highways.

### Selecting Your Tree

- Choose a tree from a dense forested area to give the remaining trees more space to grow.
- Each forest has limitations on the size of the tree you can cut and the species of trees that are permitted. See below to help you measure and choose a tree that meets your permit's guidelines.
- Tree Height: 20 feet maximum.
- Tree Diameter: 5 inches maximum at shoulder height.
- Stump height: 6 inches maximum.
- Take the whole tree. Do not remove the top of the tree; cut down the entire tree.
- If snow is on the ground, remove it from around the stump so you can accurately measure the stump and tree height.
- Cut the leftover branches from the stump and scatter them.

### Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Plan ahead and be prepared when you head out to cut your tree.
- Make sure you know the weather conditions and road closures. Roads may not be plowed.
- Ensure you do not block gates or roads where you park.

#### Contact Us

Divide District  
(719) 657-3321

Saguache District  
(719) 655-2547

Conejos Peak District  
(719) 480-9892



## Helpful Cutting Tips

- Before you leave home, be sure to measure the space where you plan to place the tree in your home (height and width) and measure the space in your vehicle where you will be transporting the tree.
- Carry your tree carefully out of the woods. Dragging the tree will rub off needles and bark.
- If the tree is too big to transport inside of your vehicle, wrap it in canvas to prevent wind damage.
- Once home, cut the bottom of the trunk off and place the freshly cut trunk in a bucket of water. Replenish water.
- If storing your tree outside for a few days before putting it in the house, keep it in an area protected from the wind and in the shade.
- Tools you might want to consider bringing with you include a measuring tape to ensure you select a tree that fits in your home; handsaw to cut your tree; gloves to protect your hands; boots to protect your feet; a tarp to sit on and/or to move your tree once it's cut; and rope or straps to secure your tree to your vehicle.



## Other Forest Products

- Up to 50 dry cones may be collected per household per year for free without a permit.
- Up to 10 conifer boughs may be collected per household per year for free without a permit. They must be under 2 inches in diameter and if taking the whole branch, it must be trimmed at the trunk.
- Up to 10 conifer boughs are included with your Christmas tree permit.

## *Christmas Tree Care*

You may have heard of special recipes to feed your tree to prolong its life in your home. Some of these recipes call for household ingredients like bleach and sugar while others also call for expensive ingredients found at specialty garden stores.

What's best for your tree is just plain water and lots of it. Skip all the additives and just keep it well watered! Trees growing in the forest do need minerals in small quantities and they produce all the sugars they need themselves. In winter, these trees shut down and are not actively growing or sprouting new branches; they are just surviving.

Winter is a long drought for trees. Most water is frozen and therefore inaccessible, so trees store and conserve water to survive. When you bring your Christmas tree into your cozy home it won't start growing again, but it will lose more water. Try to keep your tree in a cooler location and always give it plenty to drink. Depending on how deep the water well in your tree stand is, you may need to fill it multiple times a day when you first bring your tree inside.

Don't forget to check the cords and plugs of your electrical decorations to ensure that they are not frayed, broken, or exposing wires. If they are damaged, they are a hazard so throw them away!

