

**SPECIAL USES PERMIT GUIDE**  
**USDA FOREST SERVICE**  
**STANISLAUS NATIONAL FOREST**

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This guide is intended to familiarize prospective proponents/applicants with the application process for a special use permit for recreation events, commercial filming/still photography, and outfitting/guiding. After familiarizing yourself with this guide, it is recommended that you read the information sheet that applies to the permit you are interested in applying for. Following is 1) an overview of special use authorizations, and 2) an overview of the recreation event, commercial filming/still photography, and outfitting/guiding permit process.

**SPECIAL USE AUTHORIZATIONS OVERVIEW**

With very few exceptions, a special use authorization is required 1) to occupy, use, or build on National Forest System (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; or 3) if an activity on NFS land involves individuals or organization with 75 or more participants or spectators. A prospective use must be approved via an authorization from the Forest Service. Authorizations can be in the form of a lease, easement, right-of-way, or permit. A permit authorization is required for recreation events, commercial filming/still photography, and outfitting/guiding activities on NFS lands. Outfitting/guiding permits can be a 1) temporary permit (issued for up to one year of use), or a 2) priority use permit (issued for up to ten years of use).

To obtain an authorization, a proponent needs to 1) Review the Stanislaus NF Special Use website [Stanislaus National Forest - Passes & Permits \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/land-management/land-use/permits/Stanislaus-National-Forest-Passes-Permits) to gather information on rules, regulations, costs, and timelines; and 2) complete and submit an application to [SM.FS.R5StanPermit@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.R5StanPermit@usda.gov) and attach any required supplemental documentation, which could include such documents as business plans, operating plans, performance evaluations, liability insurance, and licenses or registrations.

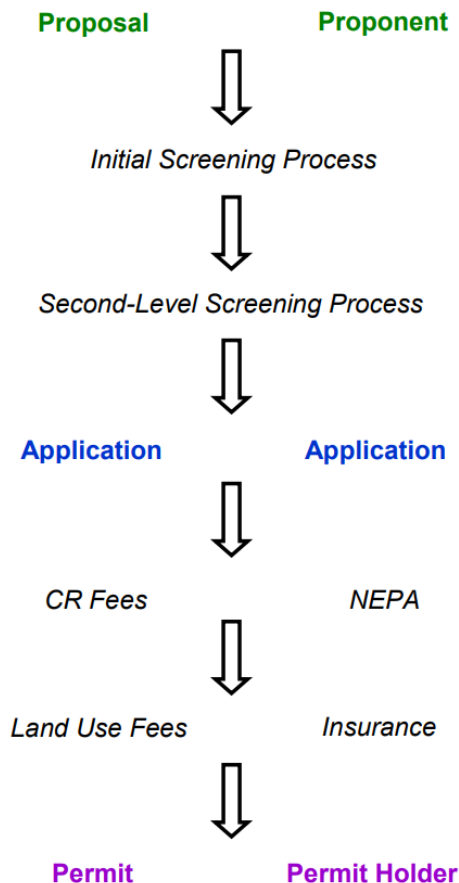
Whether or not an authorization is ultimately issued is dependent on a variety of factors, including the initial and second-level screening criteria. For example, preference in processing proposals/applications and issuing authorizations is given to uses that offer public services and benefits over private uses. Some of other reasons a proposal or application may be denied include:

- 1) The application was not complete.
- 2) Financial or technical capability was not sufficiently documented.
- 3) Physical, biological, or social environmental impacts of the proposed activity.
- 4) Forest Service staff has other previously scheduled or higher priority work.

Unless specifically prohibited, individuals, business entities, corporations, partnerships, associations, municipalities, or agencies of local, State, or Federal governments may hold a special use authorization.

## PERMIT PROCESS

Requests for permit to conduct recreation event, commercial filming/still photography, or outfitting/guiding activities on NFS lands are referred to as special use “proposals”. The person/persons making a proposal are referred to as the “proponent”. The Forest Service conducts an initial and second-level screening process before accepting a proposal as a formal special use “application”. If an application meets all requirements, a special use permit may be issued. This process is depicted below:



## PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING

Once communication has been sent to [SM.FS.R5StanPermit@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.R5StanPermit@usda.gov) a Special Uses Permit Administrator will be assigned to your case to discuss the proposal’s nature, the agency’s evaluation guidelines, and any applicable laws and regulations.

At this stage it may not be necessary for the proponent to supply the Forest Service with detailed proposal information. Conceptual proposals may be sufficient for the Forest Service to determine 1) if the Forest Service has the administrative capability of taking on a new proposal; 2) if the proposed use is consistent with the existing laws, regulations, and requirements; 3) probably time frames; and 4) potential land use conflicts. Discussing the proposal early- on can help to prevent a proponent and the Forest Service from expending unnecessary time and money and can help the proponent determine if the proposal is really something they wish to pursue.

## **INITIAL SCREENING OF A PROPOSAL**

Once the application specific to the proposal type (recreation event, commercial filming/still photography, or outfitting/guiding) is submitted to the special uses permit email [SM.FS.R5StanPermit@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.R5StanPermit@usda.gov). The Special Uses Permit administrator you've been working with, and other administrators will thoroughly review the completed application. An application without sufficient information may be denied at any stage of the screening process, with or without the option of resubmitting the application.

Proposals are initially screened with the nine criteria below to determine if the proposed use:

- 1) Is consistent with the laws, regulations, order, and policies establishing or governing NFS lands (including policy in Forest Service Manuals [FSM] 2703.1 and 2703.2); other applicable Federal, State, and local laws.
- 2) Is consistent with standards and guidelines in the Stanislaus National Forest Land Management Resource Plan (Forest Plan).
- 3) Will not pose a serious and substantial risk to public health or safety.
- 4) Will not create an exclusive or perpetual right of use or occupancy.
- 5) Will not unreasonably conflict or interfere with administrative used of the Forest Service, with other schedule or authorized existing uses, or use of adjacent NFS lands.