



Forest Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

February 2025

# Request for Expressed Interest for Campground and Related Granger-Thye Concessions

## Rose Canyon Complex

### Santa Catalina Ranger District, Coronado National Forest



Figure 1. Photo collage of various sites included in the offering.

# Contents

Introduction .....	1
Area Description.....	1
Business Opportunity .....	1
Rose Canyon Campground .....	2
Showers Point Group Site .....	3
Spencer Canyon Campground.....	3
Whitetail Campground.....	3
Sollers Cabin .....	3
Palisades Ranger Residence Cabin .....	4
Gross Revenue & Fees .....	4
Minimum Operating Seasons.....	5
Future Investment and Services.....	6
Construction of Yurts or Other Enclosed Camping Structures .....	6
Campsite Improvements, Enhancements, or Conversions .....	6
Potential Sales, Rentals, or Services .....	6
Sales.....	6
Rentals .....	6
Services .....	7
Forest Service Concession Programs and Policies .....	7
Authorities.....	7
Restrictions.....	7
Other Pertinent Information .....	7
Applicable Forest Orders.....	7
Actions Requiring NEPA Review .....	7
Archaeological Resources .....	7
Water System .....	8
Permit Term, Insurance, and Bonding.....	9
Site Tour .....	9
RFEI Submissions .....	9
Submission Format .....	9
Submission Criteria.....	9
DUE DATE .....	10
Questions .....	10
Advertisement Period .....	10
Notice .....	10

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Vicinity and Area Maps

Appendix 2: Submission Form

## **Introduction**

Providing recreational services and facilities is a key part of the Forest Service's mission. To fulfill this responsibility, the agency relies upon volunteer, organizational, and commercial partners to help expand the scope of opportunities for the visiting public.

The purpose of this Request for Expressed Interest (RFEI) is to determine:

- Whether sufficient competitive interest exists for the current services being offered
- Invite feedback regarding the offering and proposed recreational use of the sites

Submissions received from this request may demonstrate a need to issue a prospectus in the future. Submissions may also help shape the type of activities and the level of use allowed in a future solicitation.

## **Area Description**

The Coronado National Forest spans sixteen scattered mountain ranges or "sky islands" rising dramatically from the desert floor, supporting plant communities as biologically diverse as those encountered on a trip from Mexico to Canada.

The Santa Catalina Mountains comprise one of the "sky islands" in the Coronado National Forest. From the desert floor to the upper slopes of Mt. Lemmon, biozones vary from Sonoran Desert to subalpine forest, with wildlife communities that are equally diverse.

The Santa Catalina Ranger District forms Tucson's northern boundary and provides a dramatic backdrop and orientation point for the sprawling desert city. The Santa Catalina Mountains are a popular year-round destination for residents and tourists alike, offering developed recreation, climatic relief, and wilderness opportunities.

Sky Island Scenic Byway, locally known as Catalina Highway and/or Mt. Lemmon Highway, provides access to the Santa Catalina Mountains' beautiful vistas, campgrounds, picnic areas, trails, ski area, and the village of Summerhaven. The 25-mile route climbs from an elevation of 2,900 feet to over 9,000 feet. The highway, which is traveled by over one-million visitors each year, was designated a Scenic Byway in 1995 by Congress.

Spring, summer, and fall seasons usually provide a repeated and expected weather pattern. April and May are usually dry with warm days and cool nights. June is usually the driest month, often with some high winds and the highest possibility for wildland fire. July and August comprise the main portion of the monsoon season with higher humidity levels and the possibility of afternoon thunderstorms. September cools slightly, with monsoon rains possibly through the end of the month. October through December typically feature calmer and cooler weather.

## **Business Opportunity**

This opportunity was advertised through prospectus in 2016 and included Rose Canyon Campground, Whitetail Campground, Showers Point Group Site, and Spencer Canyon

Campground. The Forest has decided to add two rental cabins to the opportunity and assess competitive interest.

Rose Canyon Campground, including Rose Canyon Lake, Showers Point Group Site, Spencer Canyon Campground and Whitetail Campground are all located between 24-29 miles from the northeast city limit edge of Tucson, off the Catalina Highway Scenic Drive near the summit of Mt. Lemmon. Topography is generally comprised of steep hills covered with stands of Ponderosa pine with a range of elevations between 7,200 – 7,800 feet. Summer temperatures may range from high 40's at night to low-mid 80's during the day. From late September on, freezing nighttime temperatures are common with daytime temperatures into the high 60's.

Sollers Cabin and Palisades Ranger Residence Cabin is also located in the Santa Catalina Mountains, 20 miles northeast of Tucson, Arizona. The cabins are reached via the same route, the Sky Island Scenic Byway, locally known as Catalina Highway and/or Mt. Lemmon Highway.

The following is a detailed description of the recreation facilities and government owned property included in this opportunity. See appendix 1 for maps and a detailed layout of the area.

## Rose Canyon Campground

The camping area is comprised of seven (7) loops and one large area called "The Flats" for a total of 73 single-family camping units and 1 double-family camping unit. Potable water is available in all camping loops and in several locations along the main facility road via the water tank adjacent to Loop 3. Units contain picnic tables, fire rings and/or barbecue grills, bear-proof food storage boxes, and parking spurs or parking lots. Two barrier-free units are located in "The Flats" area.

The Rose Canyon Lake day use parking lot is served by two, dual-riser CXT concrete vault restrooms installed in 2022. Located adjacent to the use parking lot is a building modified with water and electric used as a camp store.

On the west edge of the day use parking lot provides road access to the Rose Canyon Lake barrier-free access parking lot. This area has been modified to accommodate four (4) vehicles for persons with disabilities to access Rose Canyon Lake. Rose Canyon Lake is a small 7.2-acre impoundment and is stocked with fish throughout the spring, summer and fall by Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), under a special use permit. A trail travels around both sides of the lake; however, a fence prohibits crossing the impoundment. A small 0.2-mile barrier-free trail extends from the barrier-free parking lot near Rose Canyon Lake. One regulatory information kiosk, a fishing site, and three animal proof trash cans (one double; two single) are distributed along the trail. The permit holder assumes responsibility for cleaning the lakeshore trail, removal of graffiti, and trash disposal. **No boating or swimming is permitted in the lake** (see Applicable Forest Orders).

Located at the west edge of the day use parking lot is the 150-person capacity amphitheater with electricity. The amphitheater was originally designed for use as a Forest Service interpretive facility. This facility is very popular for weddings or group gatherings. Daily reservation period of use will be permitted from 0600 hours to 1800 hours. The permit holder assumes responsibility for setting up, taking down, and cleaning the amphitheater when used.

Lizard Rock is an established group ramada picnic site located close to the entrance of Rose Canyon. This reservable ramada has a 120-person capacity. The group site contains one four-hole vault toilet, two surfaced parking lots, and a small, paved walkway providing minimal barrier-free

access to the site. Other facilities include picnic tables, accessible tables, barbecue grills, and one fireplace. This ramada will continue to be offered by the permit holder as a Group Day Use Area under the National Recreation Reservation Service and be managed by the permit holder. Daily period of use will be 0600 hours to 2200 hours.

Another group ramada picnic area, Bobcat, is located just prior to the Rose Canyon Lake day use parking lot. This ramada will serve up to 50 people, contains picnic tables, barbecue grills, and parking. There is no on-site restroom facility, however, persons using this ramada use the vault toilets located in the lake day use parking lot. This site does not provide barrier-free access.

Recreation.gov: <https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/232284>

## Showers Point Group Site

Showers Point Group Site contains three ramadas, each having a fireplace, barbecue grills, picnic tables, and limited parking availability. Potable water is provided to site through the water tank located above Ramada #3. One host unit is available with room for a trailer or RV and has electric, water, and phone hookups.

Recreation.gov: <https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/232285>

## Spencer Canyon Campground

Spencer Canyon Campground contains three campground loops: Ponderosa, Spencer and Turkey Track. A fourth campground area is located along the main campground road and is called East Fork. There are a total of 60 single family camping units and two group units for up to 15 people. Camping units contain parking spurs, picnic tables, fire rings and/or pedestal barbecue grills. Potable water is provided to Ponderosa Loop and East Fork from a water tank located in the Ponderosa Loop. A second water tank located in the Spencer Loop serves both Spencer and Turkey Track loops. Located in Turkey Track are two group use areas, each accepting small groups up to 15 people.

Currently there are no reservations. The Forest may entertain a portion of the sites be reservable in the future, but the operator must allow for some to be available for first come first served.

## Whitetail Campground

Whitetail Campground is a group campground with five sites and is available by reservation only.

All five group areas have picnic shelters that can accommodate between 40 to 90 people each and come equipped with drinking water, electricity (small appliances only), trash collection and vault toilets.

Recreation.gov: <https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/234564>

## Sollers Cabin

The Sollers Cabin is a two-story, six-room cabin suitable for up to eight people. The cabin has 3 bedrooms, each with a queen-sized bed, a dining/living room, 1.5 bathrooms, and a fully equipped kitchen. The living room contains two queen-size futons. The dining room has a table which seats eight. The newly added sunroom is great for morning coffee or a good book. The kitchen is equipped with an electric stove and oven, microwave, refrigerator, pots, pans, utensils,

dishes, a toaster, and a coffee pot. The house has electricity, electric heating (no A/C), and running water. Currently, guests are not to use the fireplace in the cabin. Unless fire restrictions are in effect, guests can have a fire in the fire ring outside.

The cabin is available from mid-March to mid-November.

Recreation.gov: <https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/10122832>

## Palisades Ranger Residence Cabin

The Palisades Ranger Residence is a five-room cabin, suitable for up to four people. The cabin has a bedroom, dining room, living room, bathroom, and fully equipped kitchen. The bedroom has a queen bed, while the living room contains 2 full-size futons. The dining room has a table and four chairs. The kitchen is equipped with a propane stove/oven, microwave, refrigerator, pots, pans, utensils, dishes, and a coffee pot. The house has electricity, a propane heater, and running water, there is also an enclosed front yard.

The cabin is available year-round.

Recreation.gov: <https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/250033>

## Gross Revenue & Fees

In the past three years, the current uses at the described facilities generated gross revenues as shown in table 1. Fees that have been charged at the sites for the last three years are described in table 2.

**Table 1. Gross Revenue by Facility**

Facility	2022	2023	2024
Rose Canyon Campground	\$349,789.17	\$247,737.00	\$305,930.32
Showers Point Group Site	\$19,452.70	\$19,658.00	\$20,713.13
Spencer Canyon Campground	\$64,101.79	\$70,943.00	\$77,824.45
Whitetail Campground	\$57,531.58	\$58,665.00	\$57,497.77
<b>Campground Total Gross Revenue</b>	<b>\$490,875.24*</b>	<b>\$424,004.00*</b>	<b>\$459,711.09*</b>
Palisades Ranger Cabin	\$37,467	\$31,886	\$39,392
Sollers Cabin	\$25,853	\$26,088	\$33,350
<b>Cabin Total Gross Revenue</b>	<b>\$63,320</b>	<b>\$57,974</b>	<b>\$72,742</b>

\*The gross revenue totals include the sale of merchandise, firewood, ice, etc.

**Table 2. Camping and Use Fees.**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>2023 Fee</b>	<b>2024 Fee</b>	<b>2025 Fee</b>
<b>Rose Canyon Amphitheater</b> Group Site: up to 50 persons 51-90 persons 91-121 persons	\$90.00 \$125.00 \$145.00	\$97.00 \$135.00 \$157.00	\$180.00 \$150.00 \$174.00
<b>Rose Canyon Campground</b> Campsite (single family) Campsite (double family) Extra Vehicle	\$26.00 \$42.00 \$10.00	\$28.00 \$46.00 \$11.00	\$31.00 \$51.00 \$11.00
<b>Rose Canyon Group Ramada</b> Group Site: up to 50 persons 51-90 persons 91-121 persons	\$95.00 \$130.00 \$150.00	\$103.00 \$140.00 \$162.00	\$114.00 \$155.00 \$180.00
<b>Rose Canyon Lake Parking</b> Day Use (vehicle up to 6 persons) Annual Day Pass Extra Person, Walk-in, Bicycle	\$10.00 \$65.00 \$1.00	\$10.00 \$65.00 \$1.00	\$11.00 \$72.00 \$1.00
<b>Showers Point Group Sites #1, 2, 3</b> Per Group Site (Up to 25 persons each site)	\$95.00	\$103.00	\$114.00
<b>Spencer Canyon Campground</b> Campsite (single family) Campsite (double family) Picnic in campsite Extra vehicle	\$26.00 \$41.00 \$10.00 \$10.00	\$28.00 \$44.00 \$11.00 \$11.00	\$31.00 \$49.00 \$11.00 \$11.00
<b>Whitetail Recreation Area</b> Group Site 1 (up to 40 persons) Group Site 2 (up to 60 persons) Group Site 3 (up to 45 persons) Group Site 4 (up to 45 persons) Group Site 5 (up to 90 persons)	\$125.00 \$140.00 \$125.00 \$125.00 \$165.00	\$135.00 \$151.00 \$135.00 \$135.00 \$178.00	\$150.00 \$168.00 \$150.00 \$150.00 \$197.00
<b>All Available Campsite (above areas)</b> Day Use (vehicle up to 6 persons) Extra person, Individual, Walk-In, Bicycle	\$10.00 \$1.00	\$11.00 \$1.00	\$11.00 \$1.00
<b>Firewood</b>	\$7.00	\$9.00	\$10.00
<b>Cabins</b> Palisades Ranger Residence Sollers Cabin	\$125.00* \$175.00*	\$125.00* \$175.00*	\$125.00* \$175.00*

\*Additional reservation fees and taxes may apply.

## Minimum Operating Seasons

The minimum operating season for the campgrounds (Rose Canyon, Spencer, Showers Point and Whitetail) is **April 15 through October 15**. Actual start dates are weather dependent and may open as early as mid-March if feasible. All campgrounds are subject to the heavy holiday use during the season; all campgrounds are closed during winter months.

The Rose Canyon Lake Day Use Parking has traditionally been open during the same period. Proposals to extend the operating period in the spring and the late fall would be considered. Other Forest Service-operated high elevation day use facilities in the vicinity are open from March 1 to December 15.

Sollers Cabin is open seasonally from **April 1 through November 30** and Palisades Ranger Residence Cabin is **open year-round**.

Once advertised, applicants to the prospectus will need to propose the period in which they will operate the sites. All sites must be open and operational seven days per week during the minimum operating season, unless a Forest Service closure order is in effect. The intention of the Forest Service is to make them available for a duration each day comparable to surrounding recreation sites (6 am to 10 pm).

## **Future Investment and Services**

The Coronado National Forest is inviting public and private entities to submit concepts and ideas that would improve visitor services and opportunities at the sites, as well as gauge interest for the proposed offering. The Forest would like to see what visions there are for the facilities, and how that vision could be achieved, aligning with the mission of the Forest Service. Some examples are listed below and may be included in the prospectus as an additional evaluation criterion.

### **Construction of Yurts or Other Enclosed Camping Structures**

The Forest Service would consider proposals that include construction and operation of these types of temporary facilities and may include glamping opportunities.

### **Campsite Improvements, Enhancements, or Conversions**

The Forest Service would consider proposals that include adding amenities to campsites, such as power, water, septic, etc. for both host sites and customer sites.

Additionally, the Forest would consider the future conversion of campsites to day use sites or trail access parking at Spencer Campground upon completion of the proposed Tucson Vista Trail.

## **Potential Sales, Rentals, or Services**

Respondents may include willingness to provide a variety of necessities, convenience items, rental gear, and/or services at permitted recreation site locations. This list of potential sales, services, and/or fees below is not meant to be all-inclusive.

### **Sales**

- Supplies (firewood, propane, miscellaneous camping essentials, food and drink, fishing, etc.)
- Passes and licenses (hunting, fishing, Interagency or Forest passes, etc.)
- Informational and interpretive materials (books, posters, guides, etc.)
- Vending operations

### **Rentals**

- Fishing equipment
- Camping equipment



## Services

- Local fishing clinics
- Interpretive tours and programs
- Outfitter and Guide services or opportunities
- Yoga or other wellness programming
- Musical performances at the amphitheater
- Wi-fi connection

## Forest Service Concession Programs and Policies

### Authorities

Government-owned concessions are authorized by special use permits issued under Section 7 of the Granger-Thye (GT) Act, 16 U.S.C. 508d, and implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 251, Subpart B.

### Restrictions

Some restrictions include but are not limited to gambling, adult entertainment, livestock use, federally illegal drugs, and associated activities. For a full understanding of restrictions please review [US Code of Federal Regulations, US 36 § 251](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=39e024582d845c5d11b8c3f2dc5c953d&node=pt36.2.251&rgn=div5%23sp36.2.251.b). (<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=39e024582d845c5d11b8c3f2dc5c953d&node=pt36.2.251&rgn=div5%23sp36.2.251.b>)

### Other Pertinent Information

#### Applicable Forest Orders

Forest Orders may be issued to address a variety of management concerns on a particular forest. They may close or restrict the use of an area on the forest for safety reasons or to protect forest resources. Current Forest Orders are available on the [Coronado National Forest webpage](#).

No swimming or boating is allowed on Rose Canyon Lake. See [Rose Canyon Lake Closure Order](#) and associated [map](#).

#### Actions Requiring NEPA Review

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) applies to a broad range of actions that may occur in a campground or day use area, including construction activities, facility and road maintenance, ground disturbance and vegetation management activities. These activities cannot proceed until the Forest Service has completed the required environmental review and approves the action or activity to take place. The Forest Service will expedite the environmental review process to the best of its ability however cannot be responsible for any loss of revenue due to delays resulting from the environmental review processes required by law.

#### Archaeological Resources

Any ground disturbing activity must be approved by the authorized officer prior to initiation to ensure compliance with the forests’ heritage and NEPA requirements.

## **Water System**

Water for all sites included in this offering is provided by the USFS-owned Loma Linda Water System. The system has been in place for many years, and provides water to administrative sites, high elevation campgrounds, Summerhaven and organizational camps. The system is fed by Upper Sabino Creek, and the water use is comprised of in-stream flow, Summerhaven use, and forest use (recreation/administrative). Due to ongoing drought and associated reduced spring run-off, water availability can be limited, especially during summer months when demand is the highest.

The Forest Service certified water manager will maintain the source system; however, the permit holder will be responsible for paying that portion of the manager's salary, system supplies and other ancillary costs as they pertain to the treatment and maintenance related to the prospectus sites. These costs have averaged between \$14,000 – \$20,000 over the last five years.

Below is a description of the maintenance responsibilities for both the permit holder and the Forest Service.

### **Permit Holder Responsibilities:**

- Responsible for maintaining public water systems within the administrative areas of the permit, from the meter leading into the site.
- Read and record weekly, each recreation facility water meter. Abnormal use or meter indicated leaks must be reported to the permit administrator within 24 hours.
- Will monitor and record water use which will be provided to the Forest Service on a weekly basis.
- Will maintain a file on all maintenance performed which will be provided to the Forest Service or Water System Manager monthly, and/or upon request.
- Any loss of water or breakage from the water tank meter into the recreation sites will be the responsibility of the permit holder.
- Approved frost-free hydrants will be used at all hydrant locations to reduce the possibility of breakage and subsequent water leaks.
- Permit holder will diligently and constantly monitor public use of water to ensure that it is utilized for drinking water only.
- Permit holder will post "Drinking Use Only" signs at all hydrants and/or potable water sources.
- In the event there is a disruption in the water service, the permit holder will notify the National Recreation Reservation System (NRRS) and Forest Service water system manager as soon as possible, as well as place signs at the entrance to the site where the water system is closed.
- In the event there is a disruption in water service, the appropriate protocols for repair, chlorine shocking, and flushing of the system will be completed.

### **Forest Service Responsibilities**

- Forest Service will provide potable water to the sites.
- Complete maintenance of the source system (Loma Linda)

- Start-up and shutdown of the administrative water system.

## Permit Term, Insurance, and Bonding

The permit term will be for up to 5 years, with an option to extend the term for up to an additional 5 years at the sole discretion of the authorized officer. The decision to extend the term will depend, in part, on sustained satisfactory performance of the permit holder.

The permit holder must have liability insurance covering losses associated with the use and occupancy authorized by the permit arising from personal injury or death and third-party property damage in the minimum amounts outlined in FSM 2713.32. Insurance policies must name the United States as an additional insured

The prospectus offering may require property insurance.

The authorized officer may require the holder to furnish a bond or other security for any of the obligations imposed by the terms and conditions of the permit or any applicable law, regulation, or order.

## Site Tour

A tour of the facilities included in this RFEI is scheduled for:

**Thursday, April 24, 2025**

Attendance is optional, but highly recommended to familiarize potential bidders with the facilities and to answer any questions regarding the opportunity.

Please RSVP to Adam Milnor ([adam.milnor@usda.gov](mailto:adam.milnor@usda.gov)) by **April 17, 2025**.

If you are unable to attend the tour, please consider visiting the sites on your own utilizing the attached maps.

## RFEI Submissions

### Submission Format

The Forest Service asks interested parties to provide notice of their interest regarding this opportunity to determine the level of competitive interest. Please submit your response utilizing the form attached as appendix 2.

Expressions of Interest must be submitted in electronic form to the following email: [sm.fs.coronado\\_su@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fs.coronado_su@usda.gov). The electronic copy must be prepared in a Microsoft Office program or a PDF that allows for copying and pasting of text. Any page with proprietary or confidential information must be noted with a disclaimer, however respondents should be aware that submissions are broadly subject to public disclosure pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (5 USC § 552).

### Submission Criteria

The Rose Canyon Complex Submission Form (appendix 2) will instruct you to include the following:

1. Your name, company, or organization, and contact information (phone, mailing address, email address)
2. Interest for one or all sites
3. Concept(s) for campgrounds and/or facilities
4. How concept(s) support the mission of the Forest Service
5. Technical and financial capability
6. Any additional information or considerations relevant to the proposed concept or experience.
7. If there is a question or issue that is not listed in this RFEI that should be listed or considered, respondents are encouraged to include this in their response

**DUE DATE: Submissions must be received by close of business May 23, 2025.**

## Questions

Questions can be submitted until close of business on **May 2, 2025**. All questions and answers will be posted publicly on the Coronado National Forest website.

## Advertisement Period

If competitive interest in this opportunity exists, the Forest anticipates advertising a prospectus the end of 2025. The current permit expires December 31, 2026.

## Notice

This document is not intended as a formal offering for the award of any legal authorization. Submissions will only be used to gauge public desire and/or need of the current infrastructure.

Respondents should not assume they will receive any preference in connection with any future solicitation should they choose to submit materials in response to this RFEI. The Forest Service reserves the right, at its sole discretion to withdraw or discontinue the RFEI in whole or in part; use the ideas or materials submitted in response to this RFEI in any manner deemed to be in the best interests of the Forest Service, including, but not limited to, the undertaking of the prescribed work in a manner other than that which is set forth herein. The Forest Service likewise reserves the right, at any time, to change any components, concepts or approaches of the RFEI. All costs associated with responding to the RFEI are the sole responsibility of the respondent and any such costs shall not be reimbursed by the Forest Service. Forest Service will not return materials submitted in connection with this RFEI. All materials submitted in response to this RFEI shall become the property of Forest Service.

Forest Service assumes no liability for the accuracy of the information provided in this RFEI.