



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

May 2025

Campground and Day-Use Concession Pre-Solicitation

Lincoln National Forest

Sacramento, Smokey Bear, and Guadalupe Ranger Districts



Figure 1. Upper Fir Group Area, Sacramento Ranger District

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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 Lincoln National Forest is issuing this pre-solicitation to inform interested parties of the upcoming campground and day-use site concession opportunity and site visit that will occur prior to the prospectus publication. Feedback received as a result of this pre-solicitation could potentially assist the forest with the development of the prospectus.

The purpose of this Pre-Solicitation is to determine:

- Whether sufficient competitive interest exists for the current services being offered at the sites; and/or
- Invite feedback regarding the 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 Lincoln National Forest has not one, but three major mountain ranges: Sacramento, Guadalupe and Capitan that cover 1.1 million acres in southeastern New Mexico. Elevations range from 4,000 to 11,500 feet and pass through five life zones from Chihuahuan desert to sub-alpine forest. It offers a range of recreational activities including hiking, picnicking, mountain biking, camping, and dirt bike riding. It is also home to Smokey Bear who was found on the Lincoln National Forest in 1950. For more information, visit the Lincoln National Forest website at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/lincoln>

Business Opportunity

While a number of sites on the Sacramento RD are currently operated under a special use authorization, the Forest is interested in determining competitive interest for a new permit for the existing sites, in addition to receiving feedback and input on the potential to add additional sites on the Smokey Bear and Guadalupe Ranger Districts to the new permit.

Permit Term

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. Upon expiration of the permit, continuation of the permitted activity will be at the sole discretion of the authorized officer and will be subject to a competitive offering. A new prospectus will be issued during the final year of the permit term.

Site / Area

The Lincoln NF boundary encompasses 1,260,900 acres in south-central New Mexico, which includes 1,094,700 acres of National Forest System lands, intermixed with State of New Mexico land, BLM administered land, and private land. The Lincoln NF boundary is not contiguous, with more than 30 miles separating the districts. It is further divided into three ranger districts: the Smokey Bear, Sacramento, and Guadalupe Ranger Districts. The Smokey Bear Ranger District is in Lincoln County, the Sacramento District is in Otero and Chaves Counties, and Guadalupe District is in Chaves, Eddy, and Otero Counties.

The Lincoln provides a diverse range of recreation settings ranging from the Chihuahuan Desert to subalpine forested mountains. Recreational opportunities range from primitive to highly developed and are available throughout the year. The Lincoln NF consists of “sky islands,” isolated mountain ranges surrounded by desert. Because these forested mountain areas can be 20 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than surrounding desert regions during summer months, a popular use of the Lincoln NF for local communities at lower elevations is for climatic relief. Three scenic byways—the Billy the Kid National Scenic Byway, the Sunspot Highway National Forest Scenic Byway, and the Guadalupe Backcountry Byway—provide opportunities for viewing the diverse scenery of the region, which changes from high desert to high valley meadows and alpine terrain with increasing elevation.

Sacramento Ranger District

The Sacramento Ranger District is bounded on the north by the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation, on the south by the Fort Bliss Military Reservation, and on the west by Alamogordo. In addition, the district is bounded on the west, south, and east by private land, State land, and BLM-administered land. Encompassing approximately one-half of the Lincoln NF, the Sacramento Ranger District is the largest contiguous area of forest. It contains two national recreation trails and most of the developed recreation sites, most of which are operated by private concessionaries. The Sacramento Ranger District provides for recreation on 169 miles of designated motorized trails. As a result, the Sacramento Ranger District is a popular destination for off-road vehicle recreation. While motorized vehicle use on motorized trails is not designated in the other two districts, such use still occurs on the regular road system in those districts. Ski Cloudcroft, a ski area open during times of sufficient snowpack, is also in the Sacramento Ranger District.

Smokey Bear Ranger District

The Smokey Bear Ranger District is surrounded on the north, west, and east primarily by private land, with some State and BLM-administered lands. To the south, the district borders the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation and Ruidoso. This district contains portions of the White, Capitan, Jicarilla, and Carrizo Mountains, and the hills above Highway 70 east of the city of Ruidoso Downs. Both of the Lincoln NF’s wilderness areas, comprising about 82,924 acres, are located in the Smokey Bear Ranger District, and a large amount of equestrian use and outfitter-guided hunting occurs in this district. Mountain biking is also popular in the Smokey Bear Ranger District, which contains a trail system built in partnership with the local community that goes from the village of Ruidoso to the Lincoln NF; this trail system is heavily used. Ski Apache, the southernmost major ski area in the U.S., is located in both the Smokey Bear Ranger District and the Mescalero Apache Reservation.

Guadalupe Ranger District

The Guadalupe Ranger District is bounded predominately by BLM administered land on all sides, with some State and private land interspersed. On the south, the district is additionally bounded by National Park Service land. The Sitting Bull Falls Recreation Area, which offers climatic relief, is the main driver for recreational visits in the Guadalupe District. This developed recreation site contains Civilian Conservation Corps-era buildings, a publicly accessible natural pool and waterfall, which draw many visitors, picnic shelters, restrooms, and hiking trails within the canyon that all provide climatic relief from the surrounding high desert. The Guadalupe District is also very popular for hunting and off-road vehicle users.

The following sites may be included in a future prospectus offering:

Table 1 – List of Campground Sites, Sacramento, Smokey Bear and Guadalupe RDs

Ranger District	Site Name & Site Type	Number of Sites	Site Fee 2025	Average Revenue 2021 - 2024	Operating Season	Reservable	Currently Under Permit
Sacramento	Apache Campground	25	\$32	\$20,716.57	May – Sep.	No	Yes
Sacramento	Aspen Group Area	N/A up to 70 people	\$123-154	\$5,235.71	May – Sep.	Yes	Yes
Sacramento	Black Bear Group	N/A up to 70 people	\$123-154	\$5,213.25	May – Sep.	Yes	Yes
Sacramento	Deerhead Campground	19	\$32	\$2,5847.49	April – Oct.	No	Yes
Sacramento	James Canyon	5	\$0	N/A	Year round	No	No
Sacramento	Lower Fir Group Area	N/A up to 70 people	\$123-154	\$1,6278.08	May – Sep.	Yes	Yes
Sacramento	Pines Campground	24	\$32-57	\$19,590.86	May – Sep.	No	Yes
Sacramento	Saddle Campground	16	\$32	\$13,495.17	May – Sep.	No	Yes
Sacramento	Silver Campground	30	\$32	\$31,928.45	April – Oct.	No	Yes
Sacramento	Silver Overflow Campground	52	\$28	\$16,185.47	April – Oct.	No	Yes
Sacramento	Sleepy Grass Campground	15	\$30-47	\$19,783.35	May – Sep.	No	Yes
Sacramento	Slide Group Area	N/A up to 90 people	\$123-154	\$5,448.83 (2021 Unavailable)	May – Sep.	Yes	Yes
Sacramento	Trestle Recreation Area	N/A	\$5	Unavailable	March – Nov.	No	No
Sacramento	Upper Fir Group Area	N/A up to 120 people	\$123-283	\$5448.83	May – Sep.	Yes	Yes

Ranger District	Site Name & Site Type	Number of Sites	Site Fee 2025	Average Revenue 2021 - 2024	Operating Season	Reservable	Currently Under Permit
Sacramento	Upper Karr Canyon Dispersed Campground (optional)	N/A up to 200 people	\$0	N/A	Year round	No	No
Sacramento	Lower Karr Canyon Dispersed Campground (optional)	N/A	\$0	N/A	March – Nov.	No	No
Smokey Bear	Cedar Creek Picnic Shelter (optional)	1 – Up to 40 people	\$40-125	\$17,948.75 (2024 Unavailable)	May – Sep.	Yes	No
Smokey Bear	Oak Grove Campground (optional)	30	\$10	\$3,216.25	May – Sep.	No	No
Smokey Bear	Sam Tobias Memorial Group Campground (optional)	3	\$60-100	\$508.75 (2024 Unavailable)	May – Sep.	Yes	No
Smokey Bear	Skyline Campground (optional)	17	\$0	Unavailable	Year round	No	No
Smokey Bear	Three Rivers Campground	12	\$15	\$3,825.00 (2023 Unavailable)	Year round	No	No
Guadalupe	Sitting Bull Falls Recreation Area	Day-Use	\$10 car, \$25 van/ bus	\$33,893.10	Year round	No	No

Optional Sites

All sites on the Smokey Bear Ranger District except for Three Rivers Campground are optional. Some sites are small, remote in nature or are dispersed camping locations while others have been damaged by fire. The fire damaged sites are not currently operational but could be added to the permit for operation once they are reconstructed.

Additional Information / Investment

Prospective bidders may be encouraged to include proposals for new and additional investments and site offerings in their bid. Some sites, like Upper Karr Canyon and Lower Karr Canyon would require additional investment in order to qualify for charging a fee.

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.

Campsite Improvements or Enhancements

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.

Potential Proposed Sales, Services and/or Fees

Applicants may propose to provide a variety of necessities, convenience items, rental gear, and/or services at permitted recreation site locations. The 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 passes, Northwest Forest passes, etc.)
- Informational and interpretive materials (books, posters, guides, etc.)

Rentals

- Bikes

Services

- Interpretive tours and programs
- Outfitter and Guide Services or Opportunities
- Wi-fi connection

Forest Program and Policies

Restrictions

While this is open to many opportunities, there are some restrictions.

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.

Other 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)

Additionally, Forest Orders 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 forest [webpage](#).

Advertisement Period

The Lincoln National Forest would potentially advertise the prospectus in the fall of 2025, with a new permit being issued to operate starting January 1, 2027.

Self-Guided Site Visit

Prospective bidders are strongly encouraged to visit during the summer of 2025. This will allow interested parties to view the sites during peak-season and ensures that sites are accessible without the risk of snow impact and road closures. Visiting the forest and sites will provide prospective bidders a more thorough understanding of this offering. Please refer to the site list tables above. Directions to sites can be found on the [interactive map](#).

Questions and Request for Feedback

The Forest Service asks interested parties to provide notice of their interest regarding this opportunity. Please submit your response by utilizing the form attached as Appendix A.

Feedback must be submitted in electronic form to the following email:

Carrie.McDonald@usda.gov. If you are unable to email your response, you may submit your interest by mail to: 4 Lost Lodge Road, Cloudcroft, NM 88317. The electronic copy must be in a Microsoft Office program or a PDF file 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

Please provide the following in your submission:

1. The Campground and Facilities Expressions of Interest Form (attached as Appendix A). This form will instruct you to include:
 - a. Your name, company, or organization, and contact information (phone, mailing address, email address).
 - b. Interest for some or all sites, including optional sites
 - c. Concept(s) for campground and facilities
 - d. How concept(s) support the mission of the Forest Service
 - e. Target audience and users
 - f. Planned improvements

- g. Partnerships and roles
 - h. Technical and financial capability
2. Any additional information or considerations relevant to the proposed concept or experience.
 3. If there is a question or issue that is not listed in this Pre-Solicitation 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 30, 2025.

Any questions, comments, or concerns regarding this pre-solicitation are welcome and should be submitted to Carrie.McDonald@usda.gov. Questions can be submitted until close of business on **May 22, 2025**.

Disclaimer

This pre-solicitation notice is issued solely for information and planning purposes and does not constitute a solicitation, prospectus, or Request for Proposal. Further, the Lincoln National Forest is not seeking proposals at this time and will not accept unsolicited proposals. The U.S. Government will not pay for any information, travel, or administrative costs incurred in response to this pre-solicitation notice. Responding to this pre-solicitation notice or visiting the area is not required to apply for any future prospectus.

This document is not intended as a formal offering for the award of any legal authorization. Submissions will only be used to gauge competitive interest in the opportunity.

Forest Service assumes no liability for the accuracy of the information provided in this pre-solicitation.