



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southwestern Region 3

Carson National Forest
208 Cruz Alta Road
Taos, NM 87571

Santa Fe National Forest
11 Forest Lane
March 16, 2020

File Code: 2720

Date: March 16, 2020

Dear Interested Party;

The Carson and Santa Fe National Forests have been working together to bring consistency and efficiencies to our outfitter and guide permitting process. Permitted guide services provide a valuable and sought-after service to the visiting public and help our agency in educating the public about responsible and safe recreation practices.

We are aware of the frustrations caused by the differences in the way each forest has managed its special use programs. Over the last year, we have taken into consideration our current internal processes and staff observations, feedback from individual outfitters, and suggestions from the NM Outfitter and Guide Council. Our efforts have been focused on continued sustainable management of the land, gaining consistencies across forest boundaries, further raising the level of business professionalism within our outfitter community, and streamlining current processes to increase our internal efficiencies to better serve you.

On November 19, 2019, the leadership of both the Santa Fe and Carson NFs agreed to a set of proposal and application submission procedures. The following changes will be implemented beginning June 1, 2020. Below is a summary of those decisions.

The Carson and Santa Fe National Forests will implement **January 1 and June 1 biannual deadlines** for outfitter-guide priority use permit proposals. All temporary use hunting applications will be due no later than **June 1** annually. All other temporary guided use proposals will be due **180 days in advance of desired operations**.

Proponents will be notified of application acceptance if submitted package is complete.

Incomplete proposal submissions will be met with a response from the permit administrator that identifies missing or incomplete documents and instruction of a 14-day timeline for the proponent to rectify deficiencies. Proposals will be denied if requested information is not provided within the allotted time. The proponent will have another chance to submit a complete timely proposal in the following submission cycle.

Prospective outfitters who **submit documents after the biannual deadlines** will be notified in writing that the proposal is late and will be considered in the next submission cycle. A rare exception can be made if a proponent can provide a compelling reason as to why a late proposal should be considered. Acceptance will be at the discretion of the Forest Supervisor and relevant District Ranger. Late submission exceptions will not apply to temporary use permit proposals.

Both forests will no longer require submission of hard copy general first aid, CPR, and Leave No Trace awareness certifications. However, the appropriate certification information will continue to be reported by the applicant or permit holder in the annual operating plan. All outfitters and guides are required to carry copies during all guiding activities on forest lands and shall produce said certifications when requested by any Forest Officer. Additionally, permit holders may be asked by their permit administrator to produce copies of all certificates, and shall produce them within five days of request. The permit holder will receive a formal notice of noncompliance if the required documentation is not presented.

Ultimately, the efficiencies gained from these process modifications will allow permit administrators to focus on processing applications to ensure permits are in place when needed. This will also allow more time for our staff to work with you to coordinate field inspections and performance evaluations.

We are updating our required forms to reduce redundancy and make it clear the information we need for a complete proposal and application package. All forms and information will soon be available on the both forest websites.

We believe these decisions will better meet your needs through enhancing our ability to provide a higher level of customer service to the outfitter-guide community, which ultimately improves the good service you offer your client.

Please reach out to our special uses staff if you have any questions. For the Santa Fe National Forest, contact Lauren Atkinson at 505-438-5352 or lauren.atkinson@usda.gov. For the Carson National Forest, contact Carmen John at 575-758-6272 or carmen.john@usda.gov.

Sincerely,



JAMES D. DURAN
Forest Supervisor
Carson National Forest



JAMES MELONAS
Forest Supervisor
Santa Fe National Forest