

# Superior National Forest Commercial Filming and Still Photography Frequently Asked Questions

## How to Apply

Please complete the [Commercial Filming and Photography Proposal Request](#). Completed requests should be emailed or mailed to the closest Ranger District of your proposed project location:

### **Kawishiwi/Laurentian/LaCroix Ranger District**

Attn: Melissa Bittner  
1393 Highway 169  
Ely, MN 55731  
218-666-0038  
[melissa.bittner@usda.gov](mailto:melissa.bittner@usda.gov)

### **Tofte/Gunflint Ranger District**

Attn: Jessica Haig  
8901 Grand Avenue  
Duluth, MN 55808  
218-626-4311  
[jessica.haig@usda.gov](mailto:jessica.haig@usda.gov)

## Items to Note

- A minimum of 6 weeks is required for processing proposals.
- Incomplete proposals will be returned and not processed.
- If a proposal is accepted, we will issue a SF-299 Application Form to be filled out to have the permit created.
- Liability insurance may be required for certain filming or photography productions.
- Any request for drone use must be indicated within the proposal. Please see Drones section below for more information.
- Any proposals or activities that may take place within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), must follow all wilderness regulations.
- Proposals within the wilderness require additional screening criteria, and may require additional information to be collected.
- Motorized use will not be permitted within non-motorized areas.

## Cost Recovery Fee

If the proposal is accepted, a cost recovery fee will be assessed and must be paid prior to processing application.

## Land Use Fee

In addition to the cost recovery fee, the land use fee for approved applications is based upon the following criteria:

### **Still Photography Fee Schedule 2024**

1-10 people \$50/day  
11-30 people \$150/day  
31 or more people \$250/day

### **Commercial Filming Schedule 2024**

1-10 people \$150/day  
11-30 people \$200/day  
31-60 people \$500/day  
61 or more people \$600/day

The Forest Service shall collect any costs incurred as a result of the film/photography activities including but not limited to administrative and personnel costs.

### **Drones**

Commercial filming/photography with a UAS requires operators to possess a FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate.

We require a copy of FAA drone registration, aircraft registrations, flight plan, and flyers contact information for approved proposals.

Proof of liability insurance is required.

Drones are prohibited from taking off, flying within or landing within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

For more information on drones:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/superior/landmanagement/projects/?cid=fseprd588518>

### **Definition**

The following terms are used to describe components of still photography and commercial filming activities:

Actor: An individual who either:

1. Portrays a character or himself/herself in the reenactment of an event or incident, or
2. Narrates a storyline for commercial filming purposes. News broadcasters and correspondents, as well as witnesses, victims, or other parties interviewed by a news broadcaster or correspondent, who appear before a camera in the reporting of breaking news, are not considered actors for purposes of this definition.

Breaking News: An event or incident that arises suddenly, evolves quickly, and rapidly ceases to be newsworthy.

Commercial Filming: Use of motion picture, videotaping, sound-recording, or any other type of moving image or audio recording equipment on NFS lands that involves the advertisement of a product or service, the creation of a product for sale, or the use of actors, models, sets, or props, but not including activities associated with broadcasting breaking news. For purposes of this definition, creation of a product for sale includes a film, videotape, television broadcast, or documentary of historic events, wildlife, natural events, features, subjects or participants in a sporting or recreation event, and so forth, when created for the purpose of generating income.

Model: An individual who poses for the commercial filming or still photography of a product or service for the purpose of promoting its sale or use. A model may also include inanimate objects, such as vehicles, boats, off-highway vehicles, articles of clothing, food and beverage

products, and so forth, placed on NFS lands so that they may be filmed, photographed, or recorded to promote their sale or use.

Sets and Props: Items constructed or placed on NFS lands to accommodate commercial filming or still photography, such as backdrops, generators, microphones, stages, lighting banks, camera tracks, vehicles specifically designed to accommodate camera or recording equipment, rope and pulley systems, rigging for climbers, and structures. Sets and props also include trained animals and inanimate objects, such as camping equipment, campfires, wagons, and so forth, when used to stage a specific scene. A set or prop does not include any of the preceding items when they are used to report breaking news, nor does a prop include a hand-held camera or a camera mounted on a tripod.

Still Photography: The use of photographic equipment to capture still images on film, digital format, and other similar technologies on NFS lands that:

1. Takes place at a location where members of the public are generally not allowed or where additional administrative costs are likely, or
2. Uses models, sets, or props that are not part of the site's natural or cultural resources or administrative facilities.

