Grand Mesa, Uncompaghre, & Gunnison National Forest (GMUG)

Research Permit Application

Supplemental Information Requirements
(submit along with a complete SF-299)

Applicant Information

Name of Principle Investigator: _____ Date: _____
Last *First* *M.I.*

University/ Organization: _____

Address: _____
Street Address *Apartment/Unit #*

_____
City *State* *ZIP Code*

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Colleague Information

	Name	Non-student	Undergraduate	Graduate	Post-doc
1.		■	☐	☐	☐
2.		☐	☐	☐	☐
3.		☐	☐	☐	☐
4.		☐	☐	☐	☐
5.		☐	☐	☐	☐

Research Information

Project title: _____

Select one of the following:
- ☐ New Proposal
- ☐ Renewal of a previously issued permit; Permit number: _____
- ☐ Modification of a previously issued permit; Permit number: _____

MOUNTAIN RANGES YOU INTEND TO WORK IN:

Paonia Ranger District ☐

Gunnison Ranger District ☐

Grand Valley Ranger District ☐

Ouray Ranger District ☐

Norwood Ranger District ☐

Dates you intend to work:

DOES YOUR PROJECT INVOLVE:

1). The handling or removal of organisms or materials from the National Forest? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please provide scientific and common names of species, sample size and intended methods: _____

1a). Proposed disposition of specimens identified for handling or collection?
☐ Temporarily captured or handled (may include marking) and then released undamaged in place.
☐ Will be destroyed through analysis or discarded after analysis.

If other, please explain: _____

2). The transfer of animals, plants, and/or microorganisms from outside the forest to within the forest, or between different parts of the forest? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please explain: _____

3). The use of radio-active isotopes or other chemicals (e.g., pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, tracers)? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please explain: _____

4). Ground/soil disturbance? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please explain: _____

5). Erecting structures (e.g., markers, drift fences, enclosures, cages) or deploying long-term equipment (e.g. dataloggers, antennas)? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please explain: _____

6). Working in the Wilderness? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, see Appendix A

**Note: FAA Wilderness overflight rules apply to drones.

7). Working in a designated Research Natural Area or Zoological-Botanical Area? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, see Appendix A

8). Will you be working out of one of the research stations near the forest? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, which one?

Additional Information

1). Please describe your research project (study plan/abstract). See Appendix B. Attach a separate document if plan does not fit this space.

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2). How the project will benefit the public, why it is necessary to conduct work on National Forest Lands, and how the research will benefit the USDA Forest Service?

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3). Please describe the expected products of your study (papers, data) and your plan for providing this material to the Coronado National Forest.

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4). Include a GIS shapefile or KML file of the specific locations you intend to work. If you do not know the exact locations where you intend to work, submit a shapefile or KML file of the area you will scout and provide a date of when you will submit a revised final shapefile.

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5). Attach copies of required federal, state and local permits.
6). Attach a vitae for the authorized representative.

Background Information

WHEN and WHY a PERMIT is REQUIRED

Research is an important contribution to the National Forest, and information gathered from research is vital to effective resource management. A permit allows the Forest Service to ensure the integrity of a study, incorporate its findings into future management, and foster collaborative efforts between the agency and researchers. Fees for this permit are normally waived.

A Special Use Authorization is required for activities that may affect resources, public safety, or are for commercial gain. Research permits are identified in Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2724.22 as meeting these guidelines under authority of the Organic Administration Act of June 4, 1897. The purpose of the research permit is to avoid any adverse impacts on Forest resources, and to provide information to minimize any possible conflicts between Forest Service activities, other Forest users, and research projects.

We encourage researchers to contact a Ranger District office or the Supervisor's Office to discuss these criteria.

Permit Approval

A District Ranger can issue permits for up to one year on his/her District. The Forest Supervisor approves permits where research is planned to last longer than one year and/or covers more than one district. The Forest Supervisor approves all permits for research in Wilderness.

If a proposed project is located on a single Ranger District, the application should be submitted to the appropriate District Ranger. If the duration is less than one year, the Ranger will provide approval or disapproval notice after appropriate review. If the duration is greater than one year, the application will be forwarded with recommendations to the Supervisor's Office for review and action.

If a project involves more than one Ranger District, the application should be submitted to the Supervisor's Office. From there, it will be forwarded to the appropriate districts for review and a permit will be issued by the Supervisor's Office.

As part of the permit agreement, a copy of results, publications, theses, and reports pertaining to the research must be provided to the Supervisor’s Office or District Office. An annual report is required for permits longer than one year.

Our goal is to provide a high level of customer service for research activities on the Coronado National Forest. Please understand however, that depending on the complexity of the proposal, and any required environmental review, it may take up to 180 days to process a research permit. Thank you for your assistance in ensuring the permit process proceeds smoothly.

Please call to verify we have received your proposal. It is your responsibility to provide the Agency with all the information needed to review, evaluate, and make a decision on a submitted proposal and an application. All proposals are subject to initial screening. If a proposal passes initial screening it is formally accepted as an application and will enter a second screening for environmental analysis (cost recovery fees may be applicable). Lastly, the environmental analysis process will determine if the proposed use will be authorized.

It is important to note that not all proponents will receive a permit, therefore any action taken before receiving a Special Use Authorization, such as occupying National Forest System Lands to conduct research, is premature and at the proponent's risk--and is against the law.

Appendix A

Research in Wilderness and other Specially Designated Areas

Forest Service policy regarding research in wilderness is to gather information and conduct research in a manner compatible with preserving the wilderness environment to increase understanding of wilderness ecology, wilderness uses, management opportunities, and visitor behavior (Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2320.3). The main objective of research in wilderness is to conduct studies that are dependent on a wilderness environment or that contribute to wilderness management.

The Forest Supervisor approves requests to conduct research in wilderness. If planning work in wilderness, your study plan must include the following information:

1. Justification statement regarding why it is necessary to conduct the research in wilderness rather than in nonwilderness areas.
2. Identify the benefits to wilderness management of the proposed research.

Application information should answer the question of whether or not the proposed research can be conducted outside of wilderness. If not, how does the research benefit wilderness? If yes, what are the implications for variable or different research results?

NOTE that a permit application may be denied because of wilderness issues or potential conflicts with wilderness management or ongoing research. Each application will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by appropriate Forest Service resource staff and specialists.

Please allow additional time to process wilderness permits. Special management concerns regarding Wilderness may affect the methods of research.

Wilderness Intrusions and Research Procedures

Research methods that temporarily infringe on wilderness character may be used, provided the information sought is essential for wilderness management and alternative methods or locations are not available. Wilderness "intrusions" are nonconforming features or structures that are not considered part of the wilderness character. Research conducted in wilderness should be carried out in a manner that minimizes intrusions and visual impacts.

Permit applications (Study Plan) must identify proposed wilderness intrusions and the methods to be used that reduce the effects of these intrusions. Approval methods will be specified in an Addendum to the permit.

Guidelines Regarding Wilderness Intrusions

1. **Location Markers**
   Marking specific locations may be a necessary part of research since researchers need to be able to relocate specific sites or transects; however, careful attention should be given to alternatives to marking and whether marking is essential to the research. When marking is essential, unobtrusive site markers should be used. Examples Include:
   a. Place flagging to reduce visibility from trails.
   b. Use biodegradable flagging.
   c. Use specific colors for individual projects.
   d. Increase distance between flagging to the greatest extent possible.

   If markers are used, the dates and methods for removing the markers should be identified. When permanent markers are necessary, GPS identification is preferred. Metal tags are acceptable with inconspicuous placement.

2. **Research Structures**
   Installations, such as temporary shelters for cameras and scientific apparatus, and enclosures or exclosures, essential for wildlife research and management studies may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

3. **Research Related to Animals**
   Capturing and inconspicuous marking of animals, including radio telemetry, is permitted if specified in the permit.

   Transport of wildlife by mechanical means requires Regional Forester approval (See Research Equipment).

4. **Research Equipment**
   Research activities will be accomplished with nonmotorized equipment and nonmechanical transport of supplies and personnel unless determined otherwise on a project-specific basis.

   The Regional Forester must approve intrusions involving motorized equipment, i.e., chainsaws, and mechanical transport, helicopters. Requests for approval must be accompanied by an Environmental Analysis (EA) of alternative methods for accomplishing the work and potential environmental effects.

5. **Overflights**
   Flights over wilderness within 2,000 feet of the ground surface are discouraged. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has agreed to, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has posed for the FAA, a 2,000-foot over-terrain flight advisory on appropriate aeronautical charts. Forest policy is that flights under 2,000 feet will not be approved without specific justification of need. This restriction includes drones.

6. **Visitor Contacts**
   Research that requires contact with wilderness visitors inside the wilderness (interviews) may be conducted if contacts cannot be made outside wilderness; other direct contact with visitors should occur only outside wilderness.

7. **Use Restrictions**
   When conducting research, individuals should be aware there are restrictions on stay limits and group size. Stay limits for all individuals and groups is 14 days unless the permit specifies otherwise. Group size may vary by wilderness, but generally is fewer than 15 persons. Guidelines on number and kind of pack animals may exist for a specific wilderness.

Research in Zoological-Botanical Areas and Other Special Areas

Research natural areas and botanical and zoological areas are designated to ensure protection of specific biological and zoological communities. Research natural areas are areas that the Forest Service has designated to be permanently protected and maintained in natural condition, so they may serve as experimental research controls and monitoring sites for the particular ecosystem they represent and used for education.

Therefore, non-manipulative research in Zoological/Botanical Areas (ZBA) is allowed, however; the main objective of research in a ZBA is to conduct scientific studies that focus and are dependent on a ZBA environment. Certain restrictions apply to ZBAs that may affect methods of research, thus, when possible, select study sites outside of the ZBAs.

Appendix B

Contents of a Study Plan

A Study Plan serves three main purposes:

1. Requires the investigators to plan studies or experiments thoroughly and to clearly define objectives and methods;
2. Facilitates technical and administrative review, and makes the plan available to other workers; and,
3. Ensures time and changes in personnel do not obscure original objectives and proposed methodology. It also may serve to document an Environmental Analysis process.

The investigator(s) who perform the research usually prepare the Study Plan. A Study Plan includes a description of the proposed study or experiment; a review of pertinent literature; a statement of the specific objectives and scope; and, a description of the field, laboratory, and office methods planned for use in the research. The Study Plan should consider application of results obtained from the study and identify means of minimizing environmental health and safety hazards associated with the research. Also, the plan should include a schedule of activities and acknowledge cooperation.

The Study Plan is a guide and a useful research and administrative tool; it should not be viewed as a fixed design to follow regardless of unforeseen developments. Study Plans may be revised by submitting amendments when necessary and appropriate.

A preferred outline of a Study Plan follows:

1. **Introduction.** Include a brief statement describing the proposed study or action and information on cooperative efforts and related current studies. Include a brief pertinent literature review (optional).

2. **Objectives.** State major objectives of the study. Include to whom the study is important and the benefits of doing the study.

3. **Scope.** Provide information on the geographic area of interest and the scope of the current proposed study relative to a larger research program, if applicable. Information which aids in cataloging study locations using geographic information systems (GIS) is most helpful.

4. **Methods.** Describe the study or experiment, including field, laboratory and office methods. Where appropriate, include a description of the experimental or sampling design and the proposed data analysis to test hypotheses. Include consideration to the selection of experimental variables, including time, place, and treatment. Consider the sensitivity of the experiment, i.e., its size, number of replications, amount of basic data, refinement in measurement needed, etc. Describe how variables will be measured, recorded, and analyzed.

5. **Safety and Health.** Identify safety and health hazards associated with the study, and describe ways to deal with them during the study. Refer to general health and safety guidelines where appropriate, and document steps to minimize unique hazards. Consider both those performing the research and others affected by it.

6. **Environmental Considerations.** Provide information for meeting the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This information is of particular importance for studies involving threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, and sensitive areas such as flood plains, wetlands, and riparian areas, among others, and for studies which require capture or collection of plant or animal species or other materials. At a minimum, this documentation should consider the environmental impact of proposed actions. Depending on the scope of the study, documentation should also identify adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented. Consider alternatives to the proposed study; consider the relationship between local short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity; and identify any irreversible and/or irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved if the proposed study is implemented.

7. **Schedule** proposed for the study.