



Outfitter & Guides Open Season for Special Use Permit Applications

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Forest Service holds an annual open season from **September 1 through November 1** for outfitter and guide temporary permit proposals for use in the upcoming calendar year.

A special use permit for outfitting and guiding on National Forest System land is required when an individual, company, organization, institution, or non-profit group charges a participatory fee for guiding services and/or provides recreation equipment on National Forest System land or on the Klickitat and White Salmon Wild and Scenic Rivers. It does not apply to activities on private, state, or county lands where no NFS lands are involved.

Because of high public visitation and congestion at many trails and recreation sites in the Gorge, the locations and time frames considered for new proposals will be limited.

In 2026, the following restrictions will apply:

Waterfall Corridor (Accessed by the Historic Columbia River Highway): Events between Memorial Day and Labor Day will be limited to weekdays.

Dog Mountain: Between April 1st and July 1st, no outfitter or guide use is permitted on weekends or holidays.

Mark O. Hatfield Wilderness: No wilderness use will be permitted apart from guided hiking and environmental education.

White Salmon Wild and Scenic River: No temporary outfitter or guide use will be allowed on Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays. Temporary permits will also not be authorized below Husum Falls after August 11th, due to the critical spawning threshold.

Klickitat Wild and Scenic River: Temporary permits for kayaking will only be permitted between June and September. Temporary fishing permits will be subject to state fishing timing regulations and authorize only boat fishing, not bank fishing.

Permit holders must also meet the following requirements:

Oregon: Outfitters and guides must possess a valid state license or waiver, issued by the Oregon State Marine Board. This license is required for all outfitter guides operating in the state.

Washington: Fishing guides and guides operating on Whitewater Rivers must be licensed with the state. Fishing guide licenses are managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife while whitewater guide licenses are managed by the Washington State Department of Licensing.

Additionally, we require a certificate of liability insurance, naming the U.S. as the certificate holder, c/o USDA Forest Service, with our office address:

USDA, Forest Service
902 Wasco Avenue
Suite 315
Hood River, OR 97031
Attn: Special Uses

Minimum coverage amounts depend on the activity being authorized. Additional information on liability insurance requirements may be provided by the Special Use Coordinator.

To apply for a permit, please complete the attached SF-299 Form and the supplemental Outfitter/Guide Application Form.

Sign both forms with an original wet signature and send them to SM.FS.crgnsapermit@usda.gov.

If some fields in the SF-299 are not applicable, please fill in N/A. Applications must incorporate an itinerary and an operating plan. At a minimum, please include the following information:

- Description of the proposed activities
- Requested number of service days (no more than 200)
- Anticipated number of trips and party size
- Routes and location of starting and ending points for the proposed activities

Applications may be accepted outside of the open season, contingent on capacity and the discretion of the authorized officer. However, please submit your paperwork early to allow ample time to address any questions that may arise.