



Use Code 153

# **Prospectus for an Outfitting and Guiding Opportunity on the Pisgah and Cherokee National Forests, Appalachian and Unaka Ranger Districts**



**Pisgah and Cherokee National Forests**

**Appalachian and Unaka Ranger Districts**

**September 2025**



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# **I. Business Opportunity**

## **Introduction**

The Appalachian Ranger District, Pisgah National Forest has identified a need for outfitting and guiding services within the Nolichucky River Gorge area.

The Forest Service is seeking applications for the use of National Forest System lands by providers of public services that are compatible with the multiple use management objectives in the Nantahala, Pisgah, and Cherokee National Forests Land Management Plan (Forest Plan) and the Nolichucky River Management Assessment and River Plan (River Plan).

This prospectus is soliciting for use only on National Forest System lands of the Appalachian Ranger District, Pisgah National Forest and Unaka Ranger District, Cherokee National Forest.

The authorized officer for this business opportunity is Jennifer Barnhart, District Ranger of the Appalachian Ranger District, Pisgah National Forest.

## **Area Description**

### **Overview of the Appalachian District**

The Appalachian Ranger District administers over 160,000 acres within the Pisgah National



Forest. The district borders the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to the south, the Blue Ridge Parkway to the east, and spans six counties along North Carolina's border with Tennessee, where much of the adjoining land is managed by the Cherokee National Forest. Elevations on the district range from 1,210 feet to over 6,500 feet near Mt. Mitchell, the highest peak in the eastern United States.

The Pisgah National Forest is one of the most visited and ecologically diverse national forests in the country, which provides for a highly complex, integrated program. The district administers five developed campgrounds with over 100 campsites and the world-renowned rhododendron gardens at the Roan Mountain Day Use Area. Rafting opportunities on the French Broad and Nolichucky Rivers attract many visitors and the district manages three river boating and day use sites. The district boasts over 260 miles of trails, including 91 miles of the Appalachian Trail and a portion of the Mountains to Sea Trail. Strong partnerships with several large trail clubs are in place to help maintain the trail system.

### **Overview of Unaka Ranger District**

The Unaka Ranger District administers 185,000 acres within the Cherokee National Forest. The District covers four counties in northeast Tennessee and borders the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to the south near Hartford, TN and the Appalachian Trail along much of the border with North Carolina to the east. The District administers five developed campgrounds, two wilderness areas, two shooting ranges, and boat ramps/launches along the French Broad and Nolichucky Rivers, including Chestoa Recreation Area. In addition to the Appalachian Trail, the

District boasts 110 miles of other trails for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and motorized uses.

## **Surrounding Areas to the Nolichucky River Gorge**

**To the North:** The town of Erwin is near the Nolichucky River and within Cherokee National Forest. Opportunities are plentiful for hiking, river and stream fishing, horseback riding and just being in the great outdoors of Erwin and surrounding countryside. Fresh mountain air is crisp, clean and clear in Erwin. The Erwin National Fish Hatchery produces up to 13 million rainbow trout each year and all phases of fish breeding operations may be seen September through March. There is also a picnic area on the grounds. The Unicoi County Heritage Museum is located in Erwin, housed within a 90-year-old frame house, with old-fashioned country store exhibits, Blue Ridge Pottery displays and railroad memorabilia. Visitors can enjoy some of America's most scenic highways in and around Erwin, winding across backroads, running past antique shops, pottery and arts and crafts places. Erwin is also located in the tri-cities area of Bristol, Johnson City and Kingsport, and near Jonesborough, Tennessee's storytelling center and the oldest town in the state.

**To the South:** Burnsville, a small town with big adventures and wide-open spaces, is home of Mt. Mitchell, the highest peak east of the Mississippi River. Burnsville and Yancey County offer fresh mountain air, endless outdoor experiences, iconic American charm, and starry, dark skies. Visitors can stroll down Main Street, visit local artists, meander through the countryside, and make lasting memories in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

**To the Southeast:** Bakersville is a charming tiny town of about 465 people in Mitchell County, near Spruce Pine, Roan Mountain and the famous Penland School of Craft. The town was formed in the mid-1800s. However, Native Americans mined local mica deposits long before that. The town had a brief boom when mica was mined again in the 1870s. Today it's big on art and the famous rhododendron blooms.

## **Area Stipulations**

- Forest closures can occur in the advertised areas for a variety of reasons. Permittees may not be granted access during those closures.
- Activities proposed on non-forest service land will not be authorized. If activities cross other land ownership, written permission from that landowner will be required. See appendix 1, Vicinity Map and Area Map.
- Due to fire risk in the area, if authorized, campfires may have additional restrictions on outfitters and guides in these areas.
- Poplar Boat Launch and Poplar Boat Launch Road remain closed due to damage from Hurricane Helene. The Forest Service anticipates the boat launch will be reconstructed and open for use by March 2026. Should the reconstruction of the boat launch be delayed, access and use of the site by permitted outfitter and guides and the public could be affected.

## **Offering**

The objective of this offering is to provide the public with additional opportunities for outfitted and/or guided experiences which are high-quality, safe, increase knowledge and skills of participants, and promote the Leave No Trace land ethic, while meeting Forest Service goals of land stewardship and resource protection.

This prospectus is being issued to solicit applications for outfitting and guiding services for the following activities:

- Primary - Guided Whitewater Rafting (III/IV rapids),
- Secondary – Kayaking instruction, fishing, etc.

## **Needed Services**

The original determination of needed outfitter and guide services for the Appalachian Ranger District was based on the district’s desire to partner with highly qualified providers of recreational activities to provide service for whitewater rafting and other river activities. Demand for services by the public was also taken into consideration for this offering.

### **A. Activity Types and Available Use**

1. **River use for a variety of whitewater activities** – the *primary* goal of the activity is to provide a whitewater rafting/river experience with all appropriate safety gear provided. Other approved activities on the river are kayaking and fishing. Other activities may be approved with additional environmental analysis required.

Outfitter and guide use will be allocated in terms of “service days”. A service day is an allocation of use constituting a day or any part of a day on National Forest System lands for which an outfitter or guide provides services to a client (FSH 2709.14, Chap 50, sec. 53.1e).

The 1984 Nolichucky River Plan sets the maximum number of outfitters and guides at eight and the maximum number of outfitted public (service days) at 480 per day. A portion of the maximum daily number of outfitted public (service days) is allocated to each permit holder.

Applicants should request a realistic number of daily service days that they expect to use on a maximum capacity day; applicants are encouraged to consider variability of conditions within each season and from year to year when making these internal assessments, to include limited staffing and equipment availability.

### **B. Allocation of Use**

Permits for outfitter and guide services will be competitively awarded in the following manner:

1. Up to five applicants may be awarded permits for providing outfitter and guide services.
2. Service days will be determined by combining actual use numbers for all outfitters and guides, using the highest number of service days in the past three out of four years. The highest three-year average for each individual outfitter and guide is used to determine the percentage of the combined service days of all outfitters and guides. That percentage is used to allocate the next years’ service days.
3. The initial allocation of service days for new permit holders will be based on estimated use (using the realistic number of daily service days applied for), averages of current permit holders, and overall allowable authorized days.
4. Allocations are distributed annually in March.

**Table 1: Example Service Day Allocation Determination**

	<i>Company A</i>	<i>Company B</i>	<i>Company C</i>	<i>Company D</i>	<i>Totals</i>
2021	3,715	3,012	1,664	500	-
2022	3,801	2,093	1,543	610	-
2023	3,125	1,519	1,708	725	-
2024	2,908	1,821	1,793	702	-
Highest 3-year Average	<b>3,547</b>	<b>2,309</b>	<b>1,722</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>8,257</b>
% of Combined total (8,257 days)	43%	28%	21%	8%	100%
Portion of 480 Available Days	206	134	101	39	480

5. Additional service days may be acquired from other outfitters/guides with the written confirmation from the outfitter/guide releasing service days stating the number of service days being released and the date those service days are to be used. A copy of this information must be sent to the Permit Administrator at [sm.fs.pisgahpermit@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fs.pisgahpermit@usda.gov) on the same day.
6. Applicants can apply for all activity types requested under Section A. There is no guarantee that all requested activities will be approved.
7. The Forest Service, at the authorized officer's discretion, reserves the right to withhold a portion of the 480 service days for the establishment of a temporary use pool. Service days allocated to this pool could be reserved for applicants wishing to offer short-term, non-recurring use, and who do not hold a priority use permit in that use area.

The Forest Service reserves the right to change the amount of use authorized based on patterns of non-use, unacceptable performance, or other extenuating circumstances (See appendix 8, Sample Permit).

All applicants must be aware that any award of service days does not authorize exclusive use of the National Forest. These are public waters and boat ramps, so there are no reserved launch times or blocking off areas to keep others from enjoying the area during your trips.

## II. Forest Service Program and Policies

### Advertising

Permit holders must submit brochures or website printouts that display current rates and services offered. If a permit is awarded, any print, online, or other advertisement must include language that states that the outfitting and guiding services are being offered on the Pisgah and Cherokee National Forests and are authorized under a Special Use Permit. Additionally, all advertising must include the full [USDA non-discrimination statement](#) and indicate that the organization is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. See appendix 7, Operating Plan Template, Section E, for more specifics.

### Record Keeping

Permit holders will be required to provide to the Forest Service annual financial and actual use records for the authorized activity(ies) to determine annual fees. All original records of use by activity, number of clients, number of days, location, and gross revenues by activity type must be

retained and readily available for inspection for five years. Unicoi County, TN has a special tax form and fee to be submitted and paid monthly. A copy of this form must be submitted to Forest Service to show daily usage and compliance with local policy. For an example, please see appendix 2, Sample End of Year Use Report and appendix 3, Sample Unicoi County Tax Report.

## Outfitter and Guide Policy

The Special Use Permit(s) will be administered in accordance with Forest Service policy (FSH 2709.14 Chapter 50). Permit holders and their employees are expected to understand the terms and conditions under which they operate. An example of a priority use permit can be found in appendix 8.

## Fees

There is a commercial use fee for any permit authorized. These fees are calculated using the guidelines in Chapter 30, Forest Service Handbook 2709.11. These fees are:

- a) A fee for the permit privileges and use of Forest Service lands based on the service days used and/or the amount the outfitter charges for the services provided to the clients. Prior to the season of use, the annual fee expected to be due for the authorization will be estimated by calculating the fee on 3% of the expected adjusted gross revenue. The final fee will be calculated following the operating season. The permittee is required to provide their financial and actual use records within 30 days of the end of the operating season or an established deadline in order that the final fee can be calculated on actual use and revenue.
- b) The minimum fee for outfitting and guiding use is 3% of gross revenue or the minimum annual fee of **\$130** whichever is greater; minimum permit fees are reviewed and updated on a scheduled basis, so the minimum fee may change over the permit term.

All fees must be paid before the special use permit is valid. Estimated use or minimum fees must be paid *prior* to operating.

## Performance Evaluations

Permit holders will receive annual performance ratings and periodic site monitoring. Permit holders must receive an acceptable rating on evaluations to be in compliance with the permit. Non-compliance with permit requirements may result in suspension, revocation, or termination action; the standard performance evaluation and site monitoring checklist can be found in appendix 4 and appendix 5, respectively.

## III. Special Considerations

### Cost Recovery

Applications submitted in response to this prospectus are subject to Cost Recovery pursuant to 36 CFR 251.58(c)(3)(iii) which will be collected through an application fee. The application fee will cover a portion of Forest Service costs of preparing and evaluating the applications. Fees are listed in **Section V. Instructions for Submitting Applications** of this document. Fees are non-refundable.

Additional cost recovery may apply to applications awarded additional use or a new permit through the solicitation process. A Cost Recovery Agreement is mandatory for all administrative work that involves 50 or more hours to complete. The cost to process an application includes labor and operating costs and any additional environmental analysis costs or site-specific studies associated with their operation that may lead to a special use permit. Authorized officers will notify successful applicants of any additional Cost Recovery fees in writing.

## Small Business Development Center Review

We strongly recommend that business plans are independently reviewed by a local Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Applicants can contact their local SBDC for this service which is generally provided free of charge. It is recommended that applicants submit their business plan to the SBDC early in the process to provide adequate time for their review.

**The date which the business plan is submitted to the SBDC should be provided with your application. An evaluation or statement from the SBDC summarizing the results of their review should also be provided with your application.**

North Carolina: <https://sbtcd.org/>

Tennessee: <https://tsbdc.org/>

## National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) has been completed for commercial outfitting and guiding activities along this section of the Nolichucky River and no further analysis is expected at this time.

## IV. Special Use Permit

### Permit Term

Selection of successful applicants is anticipated by winter/early spring 2026. The number of successful applicants will be based upon the overall qualifications of the applicants as ranked according to the evaluation criteria found in **Section V. under Evaluation of Applications.**

Successful applicants will be issued a priority use permit for a two (2) year term. After two consecutive years of successful performance, the permits may be extended for a term of eight years (for 10 years total).

Permits will be eligible for reissuance for subsequent terms if the holder maintains acceptable performance.

### Insurance

Holders shall have in force liability insurance to provide coverage for third party property damage, personal injury, and death that arise in connection with the authorized use and occupancy.

Combined Single Limit – A policy in the combined single limit format lists a single coverage limit for third-party property damage, personal injury or death to one person and personal injury

or death to more than one person. **The minimum combined general liability insurance requirement is \$1,000,000 per occurrence.**

- The Regional Forester may increase the minimum coverage amounts on the basis of the amount of use, likelihood and severity of injury, protection of forest visitors, potential liability of the United States, and cost of the insurance.
- The Forest Supervisor may increase the national or regional minimum coverage amounts based on a case-specific risk assessment. The same coverage limit in an insurance policy may apply to both per occurrence and in the aggregate, that is, an insurance policy may apply the same coverage limit per incident and per year, regardless of how many incidents occur. Therefore, it may be appropriate to increase the minimum coverage amounts that apply to claims in the aggregate, especially if a holder has operations in multiple locations on National Forest System lands.
- Such insurance shall also name the “United States” as additional insured. The holder shall send a Certificate of Insurance to the Forest Service immediately upon issuance of the policy. The policy shall also contain a specific provision or rider to the effect that the policy will not be cancelled, or its provisions changed or deleted before 30 days written notice to the Authorized Officer/District Ranger, at 632 Manor Road, Mars Hill, NC 28754, by the insurance company.
- If the permit holder will be transporting clients on National Forest System roads, automobile liability insurance is required in the same amounts as set forth above.

## Licensing

Applications including activities where the State of North Carolina and Tennessee require a license (or other states where business is registered) need to provide a copy of their valid license before a permit will be issued to operate on National Forest lands. Unicoi County, Tennessee requires a Commercial Outfitter permit, which must be provided before operating under the Forest Service Special Use permit. An example of other licenses would be a North Carolina Inland Fishing Guide License for guides and Inland Fishing License for clients.

- Unicoi County, Tennessee: <https://unicoicountytn.com/> or Unicoi County Government, 100 North Main Ave. #102, Erwin, TN 37650
- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission: <https://www.ncwildlife.gov/>
- Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency: <https://www.tn.gov/twra/>

## V. Application

### Instructions for Submitting Applications

Proposals for a recreation special use permit to provide outfitting and guiding services will only be accepted by mailing or delivering **one hard copy** and **one electronic copy on a USB drive** to:

**Pisgah National Forest, Appalachian Ranger District  
Attn: Shawn Cloutier, Special Uses  
632 Manor Road  
Mars Hill, NC 28754**

Emailed applications will not be accepted. Applications will be accepted until close of business (4:30 pm), on November 10, 2025. Documents submitted or postmarked after November 10, 2025, will not be considered.

Applicants must submit one hard copy and one electronic copy of their application to the Forest Service contact listed above. The electronic copy must be provided on a USB drive. The electronic copy must be prepared in a Microsoft Office program or PDF that allows for copying and pasting of text and must separately address each evaluation criterion listed in the prospectus.

Material submitted with applications will not be returned. Applicants should make a copy of their application for their own records.

**Please ensure that all requested information is submitted.** Missing or incomplete information will result in a lower rating for the corresponding evaluation criteria.

Applications must be signed. The person signing for an entity must have authority to sign for that entity. Applicants must include their address, telephone number, and email address.

Applicants should contact **Shawn Cloutier** at [Shawn.Cloutier@usda.gov](mailto:Shawn.Cloutier@usda.gov) or 828-689-9694 x107 no later than **Monday, October 20, 2025**, regarding any questions related to this prospectus.

## **Application Fee**

Applications submitted in response to this prospectus are subject to cost recovery pursuant to 36 CFR 251.58(c)(1)(ii) and (c)(3)(iii).

Applicants must submit a fee of **\$500** to cover the cost of preparing, issuing, and evaluating the prospectus. Payment due the United States for this application must be paid in the form of a money order or cashier's check payable to the **USDA-Forest Service**. Payment is due upon submission of an application and will be credited on the date received by the designated Forest Service collection officer.

## **General Terms, Qualifications, and Reservations**

All applicants have an equal opportunity to apply. Except for members of Congress, Resident Commissioners, and current Forest Service employees, any individual or entity may apply.

The Forest Service does not guarantee a profitable operation. Rather, applicants are responsible for reviewing the prospectus and making their own determination concerning business viability.

The Forest Service reserves the right to select the successful applicant based solely on the initial application, without oral or written discussions.

The Forest Service reserves the right to reject any or all applications and to rescind the prospectus at any time before a special use permit is issued.

Incomplete applications may delay the selection process or may result in removal from evaluation. All applications and supporting documents and photographs become the property of the U.S. Government.

The objective is to select the applicant(s) whose proposed activities best meet the public and agency's need. The applicant(s) selected will be those best qualified to operate and maintain these public services based on, but not limited to, the written materials submitted in the application package. The selection may be for less than the number of user days requested.

Any oral statement made by a representative of the Forest Service shall not modify the requirements of this prospectus. If it is determined that an error or omission has been made or additional information is required, a written amendment will be made available using the same method of outreach as this prospectus.

If there is a conflict between the terms of the prospectus and the special use permit, the terms of the permit will control.

No subleasing of permits or service days will be allowed. Permit holders must possess the necessary equipment and expertise to perform the services authorized and must directly supervise and operate the service. Applications that do not clearly indicate how the authorized use will be provided may not be considered. Once a permit is issued, in accordance with current policy, if the permit holder is unable or unwilling to provide the permitted services, the authorization may be revoked or terminated.

The information contained in applications will be kept confidential to the extent permitted under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a).

All definitions of term in this prospectus can be found in appendix 10, Forest Service Program Definitions.

## **Application Package Requirements**

See appendix 12, Cover Sheet and Application Package Checklist for a list of required documents. To ensure success, applicants should provide all required information and provide a thorough description of the experience related to the requested use.

To avoid unnecessary expense for the applicant, insurance policies, brochures, etc., should not be obtained until after an award has been made.

## **Evaluation of Applications**

Using information submitted by the applicant, this section describes how each application will be reviewed and evaluated.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

For the proposal to be considered for a special use permit, the proposal must pass BOTH the initial and secondary screening process (See appendix 11). Once the proposals have passed the screening process, they will be evaluated by the following criteria. The evaluation criteria are listed in descending order of importance, with Criteria 1 being the most important and so on. This section should help guide you in providing these criteria when completing the Operating Plan Template and the Business Plan and Financial Resource Response. If there is any information not asked for specifically in the Operating Plan Template or Business Plan and Financial Resource Response, but is important to your proposal, **please include that information as a separate attachment.**

1. **Experience and Technical Capability of Applicant.** Please describe employee skills and experience leading trips for your proposed activity including education, training, qualifications, and abilities. Include extent of general and specialized business experience related to this offering. Additionally, provide detailed information concerning your operating knowledge of the area in which you plan to operate. Provide current licenses and certificates, when applicable.
2. **Operations and Safety Plan.** Applicants are required to complete an Operating Plan that follows the provided template (appendix 7). Provide detailed information for each item, including a safety plan, guide qualification requirements, and emergency precautions and communication procedures. Be as detailed as possible.
3. **Services Offered to the Public/Proposed Services.** Please provide information regarding the types of services you will or plan to provide including all proposed fees. Include all information on how you aim to reach diverse, youth, or underserved populations and how your activities support the local community and local economy.
4. **Business Plan and Financials.** Applicants must provide a business plan to the extent of general and specialized business experience related to this offering. A statement of financial capabilities must be included. The Business Plan is to be clear, concise, and fully addresses operations in the area under consideration. It is highly recommended that applicants follow the Business Plan and Financial Resource Response (appendix 6). Applicants are strongly encouraged to have their business plans reviewed by a local SBDC (see Section III above).
5. **Good Standing.** Please provide and list of all other permits you have held on Federal lands and copies of evaluations (if available) you have received for permits held on Federal lands. Please provide information on ANY non-compliance or citations you or your employees have received in relation to your operations on any Federal lands (USFS, NPS, BLM, etc.). Also provide a certificate of good standing from the Secretary of State.

If this is a new company or organization or you have never held a permit on public lands, provide a certificate of good standing from the Secretary of State and documentation of business/organization registration. Also, provide a statement of understanding of your responsibilities as a permit holder if awarded a permit and acknowledgement that you have read and understand the terms and conditions of the permit (see appendix 8).

## **Evaluation Process**

The Forest Service will consider only the applicant's written application package and any past performance information obtained by the Forest Service. During the evaluation process, the evaluation panel may contact any references, including all federal, state, and local entities that have had a business relationship with the applicant or employees. The evaluation panel also may consider past performance information from other sources.

The evaluation panel will provide a written summary of applicant ratings, including strengths and weaknesses of each applicant, to the authorized officer. The authorized officer will make the selection decision based on which applicant offers the best overall value to the federal government. The authorized officer is not required to select the applicant that proposes the highest land use fee. All applicants will be notified of the successful applicant via certified mail.

The Forest Service reserves the right to rescind the prospectus at any time before a special use permit is issued. If the Forest Service rescinds the prospectus, application fees will be returned.

The following are the qualitative factors for each criterion:

**Table 2. Evaluation criteria definitions**

Color	Definition
<b>Blue</b>	<b>Exceeds</b> – The application exceeds all minimum requirements. The application is very comprehensive, in-depth, clear, and uniformly outstanding in quality. The application demonstrates an exceptional understanding of goals and objectives of the prospectus. One or more major strengths exist. No major weaknesses exist. Consistently high-quality performance can be expected.
<b>Green</b>	<b>Acceptable</b> - The application easily meets all minimum requirements. The application generally is of high quality and demonstrates a strong understanding of the goals and objectives of the prospectus. Strengths significantly outweigh weaknesses. Weaknesses are minor and easily addressed. Satisfactory performance can be expected.
<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Marginal</b> - The application meets some of the minimum requirements. The application is of fair quality and demonstrates a fair understanding of the goals and objectives of the prospectus. Weaknesses are present and should be addressed. Marginal performance can be expected if weaknesses are not addressed.
<b>Red</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b> - The application fails to meet most or all minimum requirements. The application is of poor quality and fails to demonstrate an understanding of the goals and objectives of the prospectus. Weaknesses significantly outweigh strengths. Weaknesses are major and difficult to address. Consistently unsatisfactory performance can be expected.

## VI. Post Selection Requirements

Once an applicant has been selected, the following information must be submitted and approved by the Forest Service prior to issuance of a special use permit:

The selected applicant will be responsible for the following prior to operating:

1. Final Operating Plan – The Plan and accompanying itinerary will become part of the recreation special use permit upon approval by the Authorized Officer.
2. Insurance – The holder will have in force commercial general liability insurance that provides coverage for third-party property damage, personal injury, and death that arises in connection with the authorized use and occupancy. Liability insurance may be either in the split limit or combined single limit format. In addition, the insurance must indemnify the United States against any liability for damage to life or property. The full policy documenting general commercial liability insurance coverage must be provided before a special use permit will be issued. Minimum coverage is \$1,000,000 per occurrence for a combined single limit.
3. Brochure – Selected applicants must provide a brochure advertising current rates and services offered and meeting the requirements outlined in Section II. Advertising, above.
4. All State certifications, training, and licensing requirements must be met before a permit is issued.

5. Applicable fees are described in Chapter 30, Forest Service Handbook 2709.11. All fees must be paid before the special use permit is valid.
6. Record Keeping – The permittee will be required to provide annual financial and actual use records to determine the final annual fee. All original records of use by date, trip, fee and number and name of persons must be retained and readily available for inspection for the most recent five years (appendix 2 and appendix 3).

### **Burden and Non-Discrimination Statement**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0596-0082. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711(voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a) and the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) govern the confidentiality to be provided for information received by the Forest Service.