



# Cadillac/Manistee Ranger District – Manistee River Outfitting and Guiding Prospectus Supplemental Information

The Manistee River is a major recreational attraction of northwest lower Michigan and is known for offering outstanding fishing opportunities for salmon, steelhead, brown trout, small mouth bass and walleye. The world record for brown trout was set in the Manistee River. Backwater bayous, extensive riparian areas and mature forest communities provide quality habitat for a diversity of wildlife species including bald eagles and other federal and state threatened species. The Huron-Manistee National Forests (HMNFs) is seeking applicants to provide guided fishing services on the Manistee River.

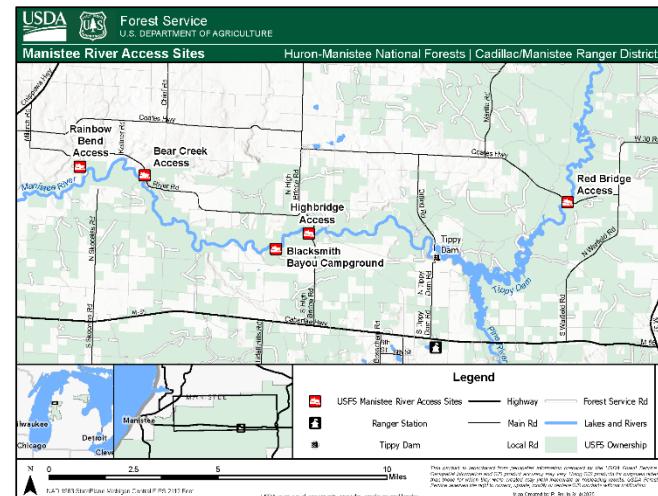
The following are common questions that may need to be fielded during the advertisement period of this prospectus offering (Dec. 8, 2025 – March 9, 2026)

## What is a prospectus, when was it announced, why is it being offered?

A prospectus competitively advertises recreation special use permits to ensure equal opportunity and enhance customer service on National Forests.

A special use permit or authorization allows occupancy/use/rights or privileges of National Forest land. The authorization is granted for a specific use of the land for a specific period of time. A permit is needed when there is a fee being charged or if income is derived from the use.

The HMNFs announced a [pre-solicitation notice for Guided Fishing on the Manistee River](#) starting May 29, 2025 on their website in the “Alerts” section. There is competitive interest for the available commercial use allocation and visitor demand exceeds the available allocation.



A map of the Manistee River demonstrates the access points and commercial permit area beginning at Red Bridge and extending to Rainbow Bend.

The policy of the HMNFs is to limit the number of permit holders offering similar services to the minimum needed to serve public demand.

Therefore, the Forest Service is using this prospectus to select applicants to be awarded the available allocation.

## What is an Outfitter or Guide?

Outfitters or guides on National Forest System lands provide specialized knowledge, skills, experience, and equipment that general recreationists might not otherwise possess. They contribute to high quality opportunities for people to recreate on public lands regardless of their skill level or prior experience.

## How do I respond to the prospectus?

The prospectus is available on the Forest website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/huron-manistee/working-with-us/contracting>. All

prospective applicants are advised to read the prospectus carefully. Applicants must submit one (1) hard copy and one (1) electronic copy of their application on a USB drive and supporting documents to the Forest contact listed in the prospectus. Applications must be received by close of business (4:00 P.M. EST) on Monday, March 9, 2026.

### **What do I need to submit?**

Required documents for applications are described in detail in the prospectus. Where templates are provided, they must be used.

### **How long does the evaluation period last?**

The evaluation period is estimated to be 4 – 6 months after the submission window closes.

### **How will the Forest Service evaluate applications?**

Applications will be evaluated based on the process described in the “Evaluation of Applications” section of the prospectus.

### **How will applicants be notified whether they were selected or not?**

All applicants will be notified of the successful applicant(s) via certified mail.

### **When do you expect to have new O&G permits operating?**

Depending on the scope of the proposed activity and the environmental analysis necessary to finalize the permit, the Forest expects to have new permittees operating in Fall of 2026.

### **What kind of fees will I have to pay to have a permit?**

There is a commercial use fee for any permit authorized. Fees for use of public lands to provide outfitter or guide services are calculated using the guidelines in Chapter 30, Forest Service Handbook 2709.11. All fees must be paid before the special use permit is valid. Fees are based on the amount the guide charges for the services provided to clients. Annual fees are calculated to equal 3% of the

permittee's adjusted gross revenue from operating on NFS lands.

### **If I am a current permit holder do I need to provide detailed information in the application or can I assume the Forest Service knows my operating history and experience?**

A detailed and complete application package needs to be submitted by all applicants. The applications will be evaluated by an independent review panel with experience in recreation and tourism services on public lands and special use permits.

The panel will evaluate information submitted in the application package. It should not be assumed that the panel members will have knowledge of the applicants' experience, skills, abilities, or operating history unless it is clearly articulated or demonstrated in the information provided in the application package.

During the evaluation process, the panel may contact any references, including local, state, or federal entities that have had a business relationship with the applicant. In addition, the panel may consider past performance information associated with Forest Service permits or from other sources.

### **Who Do I Contact to get more Information on Outfitter or Guide permits?**

Applicants should contact Reese Borlin at (231) 848-7090 ext. 5553115 or [sm.fs.hmnf@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fs.hmnf@usda.gov), no later than Friday, February 13, 2026, regarding any questions related to this prospectus.

### **Resource Links**

The Manistee River Fishing Guide Prospectus is available at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/huron-manistee/alerts>.

General information regarding Special Use permits on the Huron-Manistee National Forests is available at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/huron-manistee/permits>.

General information on Special Use permits for U.S. Forest Service is available at:  
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/specialuses/index.shtml>