

Request for Information

Outfitting and Guiding on the Deschutes National Forest



Figure 1. A collage of photos from the Deschutes National Forest.

Providing recreation services and facilities is a key part of the Forest Service’s mission. To fulfill this responsibility, the agency relies upon volunteer, organizational, and commercial partners. These partners help provide expanded opportunities for people by contributing specialized skills, knowledge, equipment, technical and financial capabilities, and resource protection through education and stewardship. Although some visitors possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and equipment to enjoy national forests, others may not have the capability to participate in an activity on their own. By permitting commercial services to operate on the Deschutes National Forest, this need can be met.

Over five million people visit the Deschutes National Forest each year, many of whom access the Forest along the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway and other portals on the Forest. The multitude of summer and winter trail opportunities is one of the primary attractions. The goal of this request is to identify outfitter and guide service providers capable of meeting the current public demand, increase the knowledge and skills of participants, promote the Leave No Trace land ethic, and meet Forest Service goals in recreation, land stewardship, and resource protection. Additionally, the forest hopes to limit overcrowding at popular trailheads.

Year-round outfitting and guiding services that will be considered include, but are not limited to:

- Transportation services – Individualized, on-demand transport that could include vehicles with racks for bicycles, skis, etc.
- Shuttle services – Scheduled transport along pre-determined routes to/from pre-determined locations. This could include truck, van or bus shuttles with racks or trailers for bicycles, skis, horses, OHVs, etc. This service might run on weekends, holidays, or weekday afternoons for Bend, Sisters, Sun River and Crescent residents and tourists looking to recreate on the Forest.
- Rental/Delivery services – Individualized and/or scheduled rental/on-Forest delivery of gear and equipment. Rentals could be conducted on-site at trailheads or from off-site locations in Bend, Sisters, Sun River, and Crescent.

This information request includes all locations across the Forest with special emphasis on crowded summer and winter trailheads and connecting popular places on the forest with larger metropolitan areas and communities.

This Request for Information will be used to determine whether sufficient competitive interest exists for the activities listed above that would warrant issuance of a prospectus. If a prospectus were issued, the Forest Service would review proposals through a competitive bid process and may issue a limited number of priority use outfitting and guiding permits under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. Any special use permits issued in response to this request will be subject to environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Proposal Requirements

Questions:	Submission Format:	Submission Criteria:
<p>Interested respondents may submit questions by email to: SM.FS.BFR_FD@usda.gov</p> <p>For specific questions about outfitting and guiding opportunities on the Deschutes National Forest, respondents should contact: Dawnette Boggs at dawnette.boggs@usda.gov and/or 503-867-3564.</p> <p>For general information on special use permits with the Forest Service, respondents should visit the USFS Special Uses website at: https://www.fs.usda.gov/specialuses/</p>	<p>The Forest asks interested parties to submit their information either hard copy or electronic file.</p> <p>The electronic file must be in a Microsoft Office program or a PDF file and emailed to: SM.FS.BFR_FD@usda.gov</p> <p>Please mail or hand deliver hard copies by 4:00 pm PST on March 1, 2024, to: Deschutes National Forest Attn: Special Uses 63095 Deschutes Market Rd. Bend, OR 97701</p>	<p>Please provide the following in your response: See Attachment 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizing the attached form, include applicant contact information, technical experience, financial capability, and describe the proposed activity and season of use including service days requested. Any additional information or considerations relevant to the proposed services and/or experience.

While this opportunity is open to multiple activities, there are some restrictions.

All proposed uses must be consistent with all forest plans and supplemental management direction and stipulations. For more information, please visit the [forest webpage](https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/deschutes/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsbdev3_035906) for more information (https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/deschutes/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsbdev3_035906).

Other restrictions include but are not limited to gambling, adult entertainment, livestock use, federally illegal drugs, and associated activities. For a full understanding of restrictions please review [US Code of Federal Regulations](#), US 36 § 251.

There are fees associated with outfitting and guiding permits. Fees are generally for permit administration, assigned site fees, and annual fees for the permit, generally 3% of gross revenue. The minimum fee for outfitting and guiding on the Deschutes National Forest is \$135 per permit.

This document is not intended as a formal offering for the award of any legal authorization. All submissions will be used to gauge public desire and/or need. Respondents should not assume they will receive any preference in connection with future solicitations. The Forest Service reserves the right to withdraw or discontinue the RFI in whole or in part and use the ideas or materials submitted in response to this RFI in any manner deemed to be in the best interests of the Forest Service. The Forest Service likewise reserves the right, at any time, to change any components, concepts, or approaches of the RFI. All costs associated with responding to the RFI are the sole responsibility of the respondent and any such costs shall not be reimbursed by the Forest Service.

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