



When Should You Obtain Special Authorization to Use National Forest Lands

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, manages more than 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands that comprise the National Forest System (NFS). Alabama's four national forests contain approximately 668,000 acres that are open to various public services.

Each year, the Forest Service receives thousands of individual and business applications for authorization to use National Forest lands for activities such as: water transmission, agriculture, outfitting and guiding, recreation, research, photography and video productions, and granting road and utility rights-of-ways. The Forest Service carefully reviews each application to determine how the request affects the public's use of NFS land.



#1. To Occupy, Use, Build

If you will need to occupy, use, or build on NFS land for personal or business purposes, whether the duration is temporary or long-term.



#2. If Income is Generated

Determine if there is a fee being charged for the event/activity, or if income is derived from the use, authorization is required. For example, a fundraiser or gathering pine straw to be sold.



#3. For a Large Gathering

If an activity involves individuals or organizations with 75 or more participants or spectators.



#4. Commercial Photography / Filming (non-personal)

An authorization is required if activities involve the advertisement of products, creation of a product for sale, or use of models or props, etc.

HOW DO I APPLY?

- Contact your local Forest Service office and ask to speak with a special-use permit coordinator. Application information is also available online at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/contracts-commercial-permits/special-use-permit-application>
- Prepare your application and contact your local Forest Service Office to set up a meeting to discuss authorization details.
- Be prepared to provide additional requirements and information for your application.
- Complete and submit your application form with supporting documents to your local Forest Service office.



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WHAT IS SPECIAL-USE AUTHORIZATION?



A special-use authorization is a legal document such as a permit, term permit, lease, or easement, which allows occupancy, use, rights, or privileges of national forest lands. The authorization is granted for a specific use of the land for a specific period of time, and should be obtained before use of land for special purposes.