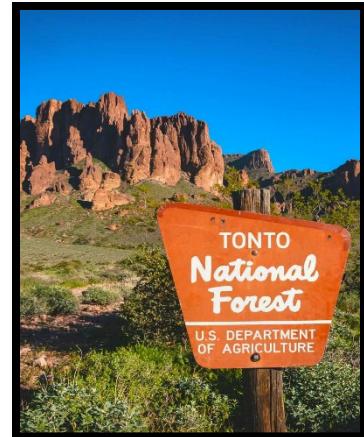


Tonto National Forest | April 2025

# Request for Information

Providing recreation services and facilities is a key part of the Forest Service's mission. To fulfill this responsibility, the agency relies upon volunteers, organizational and commercial partners. Partners help provide an expanded scope of opportunities for people by contributing unique skills, knowledge, equipment, financial resources, and technical capabilities.

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 Tonto National Forest, this need can be met. Outfitter and guide services offer opportunities for the recreating public to experience the dynamic landscape of the Tonto National Forest. Outfitters and guides can include commercial businesses, nonprofit organizations, community organizations, educational institutions, and they facilitate recreational experiences for individuals or groups by providing services, education, training, and/or equipment on national forest lands.



## Details

The Tonto National Forest is soliciting information from businesses and individuals wishing to offer outfitting and guiding services. The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to gather feedback on opportunities that may exist on the Tonto National Forest. The goal of this RFI is to collect information that will help define desired future conditions for the outfitting and guiding program. Additionally, this could help determine whether sufficient competitive interest exists that may warrant issuance of a prospectus for specific activities.

Participation in this RFI is optional and it is not part of a formal decision-making process. The Forest is asking interested parties to submit their responses by **April 30, 2025**. The response must be an electronic file saved in a Microsoft Office program, or a PDF file and emailed to: **SM.FS.SO\_OGPERMIT@usda.gov**.

*Services that will be considered include but are not limited to activities such as:*

- Guided Hiking
- Backpacking
- Shuttle Services/Livery
- Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Guiding
- Mountain Biking
- Horseback Riding
- Environmental Education
- Kayak/Boat Rentals and Tours
- Paddleboarding
- Canyoneering/Rock Climbing

## Background

The purpose of this Request for Information is to determine whether sufficient competitive interest exists 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.

Special use permits will be limited to activities consistent with the 2023 Tonto National Forest - Revised Land and Resource Management Plan. Any special use permits issued in response to this request will be subject to environmental review and public scoping under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.



## Requirements

Information Requests:	Submission Format:	Submission Criteria:
<p>Interested respondents may submit questions by email to: <b>sm.fs.so_ogpermit@usda.gov</b></p> <p>For specific questions about outfitting and guiding opportunities on the Tonto National Forest, respondents should contact: Fred Phillips at 602-225-5240.</p> <p>For general information on special use permits with the Forest Service, respondents should visit the USFS Special Uses website at: <a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/tonto/passes-permits/event-commercial">https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/tonto/passes-permits/event-commercial</a></p>	<p>The Forest Service 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: <b>sm.fs.so_ogpermit@usda.gov</b></p> <p>Please mail hard copies by 4:30 p.m. PST on <b>April 30, 2025</b>, to: Tonto National Forest Attn: Fred Phillips 2324 E. McDowell Rd. Phoenix, Arizona 85006</p>	<p>Please provide the following in your response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A cover letter expressing your interest including your contact information and a statement describing your technical and financial capability to offer the proposed activity.</li><li>• Utilizing the attached form, describe the proposed activity service day request and other additional information as requested.</li><li>• Any additional information or considerations relevant to the proposed services and/or experience.</li></ul>

## Restrictions

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

The following proposals will NOT be considered at this time:

Activities in Wilderness Areas

Hunting and Fishing

Boat or Jet Ski Rentals (Reserved exclusively for Mariana Permit Holders)

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.](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=39e024582d845c5d11b8c3f2dc5c953d&node=pt36.2.251&rgn=div5%23sp36.2.251.b) (<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=39e024582d845c5d11b8c3f2dc5c953d&node=pt36.2.251&rgn=div5%23sp36.2.251.b>)

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 2025 annual minimum fee for outfitting and guiding on the Tonto National Forest is \$130 per permit.

---

#### **Disclaimer**

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.

602-225-5200 | [www.fs.usda.gov/tonto](http://www.fs.usda.gov/tonto) | [www.facebook.com/TontoNationalForest](http://www.facebook.com/TontoNationalForest)

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