

Forest Service, USDA

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must not include concerns about possible reaction to the users' identity or beliefs from non-members of the group that is seeking an authorization and shall be limited to the following:

(1) The potential for physical injury to other forest users from the proposed activity;

(2) The potential for physical injury to users from the physical characteristics of the proposed site or natural conditions associated with the proposed site;

(3) The potential for physical injury to users from scheduled or existing uses or activities on National Forest System lands; and

(4) The adequacy of ingress and egress in case of an emergency;

(G) The proposed activity does not involve military or paramilitary training or exercises by private organizations or individuals, unless such training or exercises are federally funded; and

(H) A person or persons 21 years of age or older have been designated to sign and do sign a special use authorization on behalf of the applicant.

(iii) If an authorized officer denies an application because it does not meet the criteria in paragraphs (g)(3)(ii)(A) through (g)(3)(ii)(H) of this section, the authorized officer shall notify the applicant in writing of the reasons for the denial. If an alternative time, place, or manner will allow the applicant to meet the eight evaluation criteria, an authorized officer shall offer that alternative. If an application is denied solely under paragraph (g)(3)(ii)(C) of this section and all alternatives suggested are unacceptable to the applicant, the authorized officer shall offer to have completed the requisite environmental and other analyses for the requested site. A decision to grant or deny the application for which an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement is prepared is subject to the notice and appeal procedures at 36 CFR part 215 and shall be made within 48 hours after the decision becomes final under that appeal process. A denial of an application under paragraphs (g)(3)(ii)(A) through (g)(3)(ii)(H) of this section constitutes final agency action and is immediately subject to judicial review.

(4) *Response to all other applications.* Based on evaluation of the information provided by the applicant and other relevant information such as environmental findings, the authorized officer shall decide whether to approve the proposed use, approve the proposed use with modifications, or deny the proposed use. A group of applications for similar uses having minor environmental impacts may be evaluated with one analysis and approved in one decision.

(5) *Authorization of a special use.* Upon a decision to approve a special use or a group of similar special uses, the authorized officer may issue one or more special use authorizations as defined in § 251.51 of this subpart.

[63 FR 65964, Nov. 30, 1998]

§ 251.55 Nature of interest.

(a) A holder is authorized only to occupy such land and structures and conduct such activities as is specified in the special use authorization. The holder may sublet the use and occupancy of the premises and improvements authorized only with the prior written approval of the authorized officer, but the holder shall continue to be responsible for compliance with all conditions of the special use authorization.

(b) All rights not expressly granted are retained by the United States, including but not limited to (1) continuing rights of access to all National Forest System land (including the subsurface and air space); (2) a continuing right of physical entry to any part of the authorized facilities for inspection, monitoring, or for any other purposes or reason consistent with any right or obligation of the United States under any law or regulation; and (3) the right to require common use of the land or to authorize the use by others in any way not inconsistent with a holder's existing rights and privileges after consultation with all parties and agencies involved. When costs can be feasibly allocated and have not been amortized, a new holder may be required to compensate existing holders for an equitable proportion of the original costs or other expense associated with the common use.

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(c) Special use authorizations are subject to all outstanding valid rights.

(d) Each special use authorization will specify the lands to be used or occupied which shall be limited to that which the authorized officer determines: (1) Will be occupied by the facilities authorized; (2) to be necessary for the construction, operation, maintenance, and full utilization of the authorized facilities or the conduct of authorized activities; and, (3) to be necessary to protect the public health and safety and the environment.

(e) The holder will secure permission under applicable law, and pay in advance, the value as determined by the authorized officer for any mineral and vegetative materials (including timber) to be cut, removed, used, or destroyed by the holder from the authorized use area or other National Forest System land. The authorized officer may, in lieu of requiring an advance payment, require the holder to stockpile or stack the material at designated locations for later disposal by the United States.

§ 251.56 Terms and conditions.

(a) *General.* (1) Each special use authorization must contain:

(i) Terms and conditions which will:

(A) Carry out the purposes of applicable statutes and rules and regulations issued thereunder;

(B) Minimize damage to scenic and esthetic values and fish and wildlife habitat and otherwise protect the environment;

(C) Require compliance with applicable air and water quality standards established by or pursuant to applicable Federal or State law; and

(D) Require compliance with State standards for public health and safety, environmental protection, and siting, construction, operation, and maintenance if those standards are more stringent than applicable Federal standards.

(ii) Such terms and conditions as the authorized officer deems necessary to:

(A) Protect Federal property and economic interests;

(B) Manage efficiently the lands subject to the use and adjacent thereto;

(C) Protect other lawful users of the lands adjacent to or occupied by such use;

(D) Protect lives and property;

(E) Protect the interests of individuals living in the general area of the use who rely on the fish, wildlife, and other biotic resources of the area for subsistence purposes;

(F) Require siting to cause the least damage to the environment, taking into consideration feasibility and other relevant factors; and

(G) Otherwise protect the public interest.

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (A)(1)(II)(G): The Department is making explicit its preexisting understanding of § 251.56(a)(1)(ii)(G) of this subpart in the context of authorizing non-commercial group uses of National Forest System lands. Section 251.56(a)(1)(ii)(G) provides that each special use authorization shall contain such terms and conditions as the authorized officer deems necessary to otherwise protect the public interest. In the context of noncommercial group uses, the Forest Service interprets the term “public interest” found in § 251.56(a)(1)(ii)(G) to refer to the three public interests identified by the Forest Service on August 30, 1995. These public interests include the protection of resources and improvements on National Forest System lands, the allocation of space among potential or existing uses and activities, and public health and safety concerns. Under this construction, § 251.56(a)(1)(ii)(G) allows the Forest Service to impose terms and conditions that are not specifically addressed in § 251.56(a)(1)(ii)(A)–(F) but only those that further these public interests. The Forest Service shall implement and enforce § 251.56(a)(1)(ii)(G) in accordance with this interpretation.

(2) Authorizations for use of National Forest System lands may be conditioned to require State, county, or other Federal agency licenses, permits, certificates, or other approval documents, such as a Federal Communication Commission license, a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license, a State water right, or a county building permit.

(b) *Duration and renewability*—(1) *Requirements.* If appropriate, each special use authorization will specify its duration and renewability. The duration shall be no longer than the authorized officer determines to be necessary to accomplish the purpose of the authorization and to be reasonable in light of all circumstances concerning the use, including