

February 19, 2016



# Kremmling Field Office

## Special Recreation Permit Policy

Effective Date:  
February 19, 2016

Revised January 2016

This policy ensures that all Bureau of Land Management Special Recreation Permits (SRP or permits) are administered consistently by the BLM Kremmling Field Office (KFO).

All activities requiring an SRP on BLM Public Lands within the KFO will comply with this policy, the Colorado BLM State policy, and policy identified in BLM H-2930-1 with authorities from 43 CFR 2930.

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## **BLM Special Recreation Permit Policy**

All commercial, competitive, special area use, and organized group activity on BLM-administered Public Lands, meeting the criteria listed below, must be authorized by a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) before any activity occurs. SRPs are issued at the discretion of the authorized officer who may, at any time and without prior notice, choose not to issue permits for certain activities or use areas. Such decisions could be based on a variety of factors such as planning decisions, potential resource impacts, existing outfitters in the same area, determinations that demand is being met, overcrowding, past poor performance, climatic conditions and others.

### **Areas where the Kremmling Field Office is accepting limited SRP proposals**

Within the Upper Colorado River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), we have determined that demand for some commercial services is being met through the existing permitted outfitters, currently 61, while some commercial needs are not being adequately met. We have also determined that permits authorizing rafting and fishing use along the Lower Blue River is not possible because the US Forest Service, Dillon Ranger District is not accepting Outfitter & Guide Special Use Permits. The BLM Recreation Permit Administration Handbook requires “a letter or permit granting permission to use private or other agency land in conjunction with (BLM) public land.”

It is the policy of the Kremmling Field Office (KFO) to evaluate the need for new commercial SRPs within the Upper Colorado River SRMA each year or as needed when commercial needs are not being adequately met. Within the SRMA, the KFO will continue to accept and evaluate permit proposals on a case-by-case basis. All competitive and organized group permit applications are due at least 180 days prior to event. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Field Manager.

We will continue to accept applications for commercial, competitive, and organized group permits in other areas of the field office outside the Upper Colorado River SRMA. All applications for new, renewing and changes to existing permit applicants will be accepted August 1 – August 31 for the following year. All permit proposals and active permits will be evaluated and managed in accordance with this policy.

### **Uses Requiring an SRP**

1. **Commercial Permit**—A commercial permit is required when anyone intends to use public lands and related waters, on a recreational basis, for business or financial gain. If any of the following conditions are met, a commercial permit is required.

- “When any person, group, or organization makes or attempts to make a profit, receive money, amortize equipment, or obtain goods or services as compensation from participants in recreational activities occurring on public lands, the use is considered

commercial.

- An activity, service, or use is commercial if anyone collects a fee or receives other compensation that is not strictly a sharing of, or is in excess of, actual expenses incurred for the purposes of the activity, service, or use.
- Commercial use may also be characterized by public advertising for participants or situations where a duty of care or expectation of safety is owed participants by service providers as a result of compensation.
- Use by scientific, education, and therapeutic institutions or non-profit organizations is considered commercial when the above criteria are met and is subject to a permit when the above conditions exist. Non-profit status of any group or organization does not, in itself, determine whether an event or activity arranged by such a group or organization is non-commercial. Profit-making organizations are automatically classified as commercial, even if that part of their activity covered by the permit is not profit making.” (BLM Handbook H-2930-1)
- Non-profit organizations engaged in fundraising activities are commercial in nature. Fundraising events require a permit and will be subject to fees.
- Advertising and product promotion are inherent to business activities and, when conducted on BLM public lands, require a permit and will be subject to fees. (e.g. demonstration of recreation equipment, mountain bikes, 4-wheel drive vehicles, GPS receivers, etc.)

2. **Competitive Permit**—A competitive use means any organized, sanctioned or structured use, event or activity on public land in which two or more contestants compete and any of the following elements apply:

- Participants register, enter or complete an application for the event; or
- A predetermined course or area is designated; or
- One or more individuals are contesting an established record such as speed or endurance.

3. **Special Area Use**—Permits may be required for individual (private, non-commercial) recreation use in Special Areas. Special Areas are areas officially designated by statute or Secretarial order including: components of the National Trails System, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, the National Wilderness System, National Conservation Areas and Monuments, or National Recreation Areas. Special Areas can also be areas where the authorized officer determines that the resources require special management and control measures for their protection, and a permit system for individual use would achieve management objectives.

4. **Organized Group Activity and Event Use**—Organized group/event permits are for group outdoor recreation activities or events which are neither commercial nor competitive activities. The authorized officer, in accordance with this policy, determines when a permit is required based on planning decisions, resource concerns, user conflicts, public health and safety, and/or the need for monitoring.

## **When Permit Requirements May Be Waived**

The authorized officer may waive the requirement for a permit if:

1. BLM sponsors or cosponsors the event or use.
2. The use or event begins and ends on non-public lands and does not cross more than one mile of BLM land or related waters.
3. The use is competitive but is not commercial, is not publicly advertised, does not award cash prizes, requires no additional monitoring, and does not pose an appreciable risk to public lands. Appreciable risk to public lands will be determined by the authorized officer on a case-by-case basis.
4. The use is an organized group activity that is not commercial, is not publicly advertised, poses no appreciable risk to public lands, and requires no specific management or monitoring.

## **Timelines and Application Requirement for Permits**

### **I. Commercial Permits**

#### **A. New, Renewing and Applications for Changes to Existing Permits Timeline:**

- August 1 through August 31—BLM accepts applications from new, renewing and changes to existing permit applicants for the following year.
- September 1 through September 30—BLM will notify the applicant that the application has been received and request any additional information.
- October 1 through October 31—BLM will solicit public comment on the applicant's proposal.\*
- November 1 through November 30—BLM reviews applications and public comment. BLM will notify applicant if further environmental review is necessary.
- December 1 through December 30—BLM will notify applicant regarding permit approval or denial.
- February 1—Commercial permits issued.

#### **B. New Commercial Permit Timeline:**

- The potential new permittee and BLM meet for a pre-application consultation to foster communication between the potential permittee and the BLM to ensure the proposed application is consistent with BLM management objectives.
- 180 days prior to the proposed use, BLM accepts applications from new applicants.
- 0 - 30 days after application is received, BLM will notify the applicant that the application has been received and request any additional information. BLM will notify the applicant if cost recovery is required.
- 30 - 60 days after application is received, BLM will solicit public comment on the applicant's proposal.\*
- 60 - 90 days after application is received, BLM reviews applications and public comment. BLM will notify applicant if further environmental review is necessary.
- 90 - 120 days after application is received, BLM notifies the applicant of permit approval or

denial.

**C. New and Renewing Commercial Permit Application Requirements:**

1. Business Plan:

New applicants for commercial permits will need to satisfactorily prepare a business plan that includes the following considerations before their request will be considered. Updated business plans may also be required from renewing permittees who are submitting operational changes or permit transfers. A detailed business plan provides the BLM a basis to evaluate the proposal and effectively determine whether the proposal is consistent with management objectives. The BLM Kremmling Field Office expects a detailed plan that addresses the following:

- a) A description of the business: include the products and services that you will offer and your knowledge of the industry
- b) A geographic analysis: include a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the location where you are proposing your business, and what your approach will be to overcome any problems posed by the location (include any privately owned or leased lands)
- c) A market analysis: describe your anticipated market (age, hobbies, income, local, regional, national, international, etc.), describe the size of the current market and potential for growth in demand, and discuss your advertising strategy (how, when and where)
- d) Benefits to public lands recreation: identify how your proposal enhances the opportunity for visitors to enjoy public lands and helps the BLM meet recreation management objectives

2. Application Form, completed and signed (See KFO website for blank application)

3. Operating Plan (See KFO website for worksheet)

4. A map providing sufficient detail showing specifically where use is proposed

5. A signed copy of the SRP Terms, Conditions, and Stipulations (See KFO website for copy of stipulations)

6. Written permission from private landowners or other agencies for any approved use of, or access across lands adjacent to the proposed authorized operating areas on BLM-administered lands.

7. Application fee

8. A signed copy of the signature page of this policy.

\* Public Comment: BLM Kremmling may send out a press release, emails or mailings soliciting comments from the public concerning the new or renewing permit proposals. BLM will solicit comments based on the Application Review Criteria listed on pages 7 & 8 below.

**D. Commercial Permit Annual Operating Authorization:**

All commercial permits will be validated at the beginning of each operating season with an Annual Operating Authorization. Annual operating authorizations will be issued to permittees after the BLM receives pre-season fees, updated proof of insurance, a bond (if required), copies of valid licenses, permits and registrations from state, county or city

agencies; updated guide lists; signed copy of the SRP Terms, Conditions, and Stipulations, signed copy of the signature page of this policy, current price list/brochure, and a copy of their current client contract or liability waiver.

**NOTE: Commercial permits will not be valid without an annual operating authorization.**

**Due dates for BLM to receive Annual Operating Authorization requirements are:**

1. March 31 – Non-hunting permits
2. July 1 – Big Game and Lion hunting permits

## **II. Competitive Event, Organized Groups and Vendor Permits:**

### **A. Application Timelines:**

- The potential new permittee and BLM meet for a pre-application consultation to foster communication between the potential permittee and the BLM to ensure the proposed application is consistent with BLM management objectives.
- 180 days prior to the proposed use, BLM accepts application from applicant.
- 0 - 30 days after application is received, BLM will notify the applicant that the application has been received and request any additional information. BLM will notify the applicant if cost recovery is required.
- 30 – 90 days after the receipt of the permit application, BLM reviews the proposal and conducts any necessary environmental review.
- 90 days prior to use date, BLM notifies the applicant of permit approval or denial.
- 30 days prior to use date, proof of insurance, bond (if required), and 25 percent of estimated fees must be received by BLM. A different fee payment may be approved by the authorized officer.

### **B. Application Requirements:**

#### **Required 180 days prior to proposed use:**

1. Application Form, completed and signed (See KFO website for blank application)
2. Operating Plan (See KFO website for worksheet)
3. A signed copy of the SRP Terms, Conditions, and Stipulations (See KFO website for copy of stipulations)
4. A signed copy of the signature page of the Colorado BLM Special Stipulations; Competitive, Organized, and Off-Highway Vehicle Events – *FOR ALL PERMITS*
5. Application fee
6. A signed copy of the signature page of this policy

#### **Required 60 days prior to proposed use:**

1. Copy of any applicable state, county or city licenses, permits or registrations

2. Evidence of permission to use private land (if applicable)
3. Copy of current advertising brochure and price list
4. Copy of client-outfitter contract or participant registration/waiver

**Required 30 days prior to use:**

1. Proof of insurance meeting BLM standards as defined in the terms, conditions, and stipulations
2. Estimated use fees
3. Bond (if required)

**Variations to the above timelines and requirements must be approved by the authorized officer.**

**Application Review Criteria**

Permit proposals described in business and operating plans will be evaluated using the following criteria. These criteria offer an objective framework for SRP application evaluation. Applications that best comply with the criteria will be accepted (subject to potential modifications) by the authorized officer.

1. Compliance History
  - Applicant must be in compliance, and have a history of compliance, with local, state and federal regulations.
2. Safety and Safety History
  - Applicant has demonstrated a history of providing an acceptable level of safety for clients.
3. Consistency with Land Use Planning documents
  - Proposals will be evaluated for consistency with current planning documents, including but not limited to the KFO Resource Management Plan (RMP), the Recreation Management Plan for the Upper Colorado River, and the 2000 Upper Colorado River SRMA RAMP Amendment. All proposals in a Wilderness Study Area must be consistent with the BLM's Manual 6330 – Management of Wilderness Study Areas.
4. Conflicts
  - Permits will not be issued in areas where conflicts currently exist between existing permittees, or between permittees and the public or landowners. Valid conflicts include:
    - Camps: location, number and distance between camps
    - Types of activities permitted
    - Use levels during specific time periods
    - Enforcement/compliance problems exist
    - Improper conduct by permittee or employees

- Unacceptable resource impacts
  - Overlapping use areas where the same type of use is currently permitted
5. Diversity of Services
- Applicants must demonstrate that their proposal enhances the diversity of recreational opportunities available for visitors and the services are needed by the public.
6. Adjoining Lands and Joints Permits
- Preference will not be given to applicants who own or lease private land adjacent to BLM public lands. Preference will not be given permittees that have a joint permit issued by another land management agency office.

These criteria are a means to analyze applicants and offset potential problems. Many complex issues are best addressed through an ongoing effort between the permittees and the BLM. The criteria do not set explicit use levels or carrying capacities.

### **Cost Recovery Requirements**

If more than 50 hours of BLM staff time is required for processing, administering and monitoring a permit, cost recovery of direct expenses related to the permit will be charged. If cost recovery applies, the authorized officer will notify the applicant of potential charges in writing within 30 days of receipt of the application. Cost recovery begins after the BLM receives an application and does not include a pre-application consultation meeting.

### **Permit Term**

The KFO may issue permits on a yearly or multi-year term for up to five years. Permit terms are at the discretion of the authorized officer.

Permits with two consecutive years of non-use may be cancelled. Before a permit would be modified, other factors such as economic conditions/fluctuations, availability of hunting licenses, weather and other natural phenomena which may adversely affect a permittee's operating plan will be considered.

### **Permitted Operating Areas**

Permits will be authorized for the *minimum* amount of public land necessary to practically operate a business. Operating areas will be subject to review through post-use reports. Use areas will be modified if permittees do not fully utilize their proposed use area. Authorized areas require that there is legal access for the permittee. If no public access is available to a proposed area, the permittee must show evidence of authorized access in writing.

Authorized use of public lands outside the KFO may be authorized by a joint permit if the proposed trips start on one field office and end on an adjacent field office. Joint permits will not be issued simply for the convenience of the permittee. The joint permit will be approved in

writing by the adjacent Field Office authorizing officer.

## **ASSIGNMENT AND SUBLETTING OF PERMIT PRIVILEGES**

The permittee may not assign permit privileges to a third party, including booking agents. The permittee or permittee's representative may not assign, contract, or sublease any portion of the permit authorization or interest therein, directly or indirectly, voluntarily or involuntarily. However, contracting of equipment or services *may* be approved by the authorized officer *in advance, if necessary* to supplement a permittee's operations.

Such contracting should not constitute more than half the required equipment or services for any one trip or activity and the permittee must retain operational control of the permitted activity. If equipment or services are contracted, *the permittee shall continue to be responsible for compliance with all stipulations and conditions of the permit.*

The following is required:

- A. A third party advertisement used to book a trip must clearly indicate that the trip will be operated by the company holding the permit;
- B. Guides and employees must fall under federal and state employment regulations and be listed in the operating plan prior to each operating season. (ie. IRS Form-1099, independent contractor form).
- C. If you are proposing to employ guides or employees who are licensed and/or permitted outfitters elsewhere that must be disclosed at the time you submit their name and information on your guide list.
- D. Written notice must be given to the BLM to use equipment with outfitter markings (company names, logos, etc.) other than those of the permit holder prior to the time of use (hunt, launch, tour, etc.).

## **Permit Fees**

Fees are required for all SRPs.

- There is a \$100 application fee for all new Special Recreation Permits.
- There is a \$100 transfer fee for a permit transfer following the bona fide sale of a business.
- There is a \$50 renewal fee for permit renewals.
- There is a \$105 minimum annual-use fee for all permits. Permits with authorized non-use are still required to pay the \$105 minimum use fee.
- Commercial permit fees are based upon 3 percent of the adjusted gross receipts\* derived from use authorized under the SRP.
- Competitive permit fees are based upon 3 percent of the adjusted gross receipts\* derived from use authorized under the SRP, or \$5 per person per day, whichever is greater.
- Organized group permit fees are \$5 per person per day.

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- Permit fees due the Government must be paid in advance of any authorized use to ensure that the Government receives payment.
- Permittees with a commercial permit may pay fees due the Government in installments with annual written approval from the authorized officer.
- Permittees with competitive event and organized group permits will pay 25 percent of estimated fees 30 days prior to the use date, and may be required to secure a bond.
- Fees may also be charged for individual use of Special Areas, reservation/assignment of sites and livestock grazing when associated with recreational use.
- All payments exceeding the amount owed the BLM for commercial permits will be credited to the next year unless a refund is requested. Any refund of overpayment for a commercial permit must be submitted in writing.
- Refunds will be made for overpayment of fees for one-time competitive and organized group permits.

\*Gross receipts means the total of all financial gains received by the permittee, their employees, or agents for goods or services provided in connection with commercial activities authorized by the SRP, whether or not provided on public land or related waters. Financial gain includes payments of money, revenue from sale of images or broadcast rights, on-site sales or rentals, as well as gratuities, donations, gifts, bartering, trophy fees, etc., regardless of source.

### **Post-Use Reporting**

Post-use reports and trip log summaries will be required within 30 days after the last day of authorized use or on a date agreed to by the authorized officer.

SRPs will be monitored through post-use reports, trip log summaries and field checks to determine *actual-use areas, use periods, types of use* and *actual amounts of use* for each permittee. Post-use reports will be the primary method used to determine the actual (not proposed) use levels and the actual (not proposed) use areas.

Periodic audits of permittee's records will be used to ensure accurate post-use reporting.

For each trip, trip logs must show beginning and ending dates, location of use area, number of clients and staff, number of days use occurred on both BLM-administered and private lands, and total gross receipts.

The Post-Use Report must summarize the total number of client and staff visitor days, total receipts, amount of deductions claimed and discounts for time off of BLM-administered public lands. Payments will be made for each use period.

If no use occurs during a use period, a post-use report still must be submitted stating non-use for the period. Minimum annual-use fees apply to permits with non-use.

**Post use trip logs are due on the following dates:**

1. November 30 – Non-hunting permits
2. January 31 – Big Game hunting permits
3. May 31 – Lion hunting permits

All event, group, and vendor post use are due 30 days after event or last use.

### **Discounts for Time off BLM Public Lands**

*A BLM Use Day is defined as any calendar day, or portion thereof, for each individual accompanied or serviced by a permittee on BLM public lands or waters.*

The number of use days public land was used, relative to the total trip days (which includes exclusive private land use days), will be used to determine any discount. Discounts for time off BLM lands must have annual written approval from the authorized officer prior to use on BLM public lands.

### **Deductions**

Deductions from gross receipts for a trip will be allowed for actual transportation and lodging for a guest that is included in the price of the trip before a guest's arrival at the beginning of the trip, and after departure at the end of a trip. Deductions must have annual written approval by the authorized officer prior to use on BLM-administered public lands. Supporting receipts will be required for any deductions.

### **Stipulations**

The standard *Terms, Conditions and Stipulations* apply to all SRPs. Additional terms, conditions and stipulations may be assigned to a permit based on land use planning prescriptions, environmental analysis or other factors. Failure to adhere to any standard stipulation, attached stipulations or this policy will result in remedial action(s). BLM reserves the right to revoke or alter the terms, conditions and stipulations of SRPs at any time.

### **Permit Transfers**

Permittees that wish to have their permit privileges transferred to a new operator must notify the authorized officer in advance, in writing, and receive advanced written permission from the KFO authorized officer. A notarized bill of sale will be required by the BLM that shows no value assigned to the permit. The new owner will follow the guidelines in this policy when applying for a new permit.

### **Permittee Information Policy**

A current list of permittees and permitted uses will be posted on the KFO web site as well as at

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recreation sites, and shared with other BLM and U.S. Forest Service offices.

**Permittee Evaluations**

BLM Kremmling will evaluate permittees annually. The status of a permit will be determined through the evaluation process. Permittees will receive one of the following performance ratings:

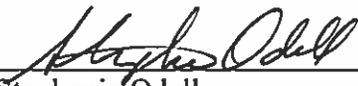
Acceptable means that the permittee has generally operated in accordance with the terms and conditions established for the permit.

Probationary means that the permittee has not operated in full accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit. Continued operation at this level of performance is unacceptable. Corrective action by the permittee is mandatory. If this performance level is received two years in a row, the authorized officer may suspend or terminate the permit and/or deny future permit applications.

Unacceptable means that the permittee has not operated in accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit and cannot be allowed to continue. This performance level will result in suspension or termination of permit privileges as appropriate to the circumstances.

Permit applications will not be approved for any person connected to or affiliated with the operations of a terminated permit.

**Signature Page**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephanie Odell  
Field Manager

2/19/16  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have read the Kremmling Field Office Special Recreation Policy (revised in February 2016) and understand that my permit proposal will be evaluated using the guidance of this policy and that my permit will be administered using the guidance of this policy, the Colorado BLM State Handbook and the BLM Handbook H-2930-1.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Permittee or Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date