

Outline



OUTLINE/STEPS FOR CONSIDERING NEW USES.

All of the information for the following steps would be documented in an analysis file - including market research, resource issues etc. We may develop a form or outline - with a "fill in the blanks" intent for these checkpoints.

PRE - PROSPECTUS STEPS:

1. Document public "need" to validate requests for new uses or increases in days for existing permittees as opposed to entrepreneurial greed. This should be a simple expanded scoping and validation exercise which considers such parameters as:

- a preponderance of requests or applications for that type of use have been received, or verbally requested.
- current utilization of similar use days is at or near 100%.
- pulse checking with local/regional providers of recreation opportunities indicates that there is a high demand for that type of service. Document "market research" with local chambers, Mt. Tourism, recent research, local businesses, etc.
- the activity requires provision of special skills or equipment not readily available to the general public, or is high risk and guiding would be an appropriate safety measure.
- a monopoly currently exists with only limited services for that type of use being offered now - artificially inflating the cost to the public.
- what else??

2) Establish if there are overriding resource/social concerns related to the new use for the area proposed - e.g. does the proposal fit with DFC direction for the landscape and type of experience being managed for? Complete documentation for the following criteria: (we may wish to design a separate list of criteria for wilderness (tiering to WME/LAC types of standards) and non wilderness.)

- social concerns: conflicting use types, current heavy or overuse of an area, overview of the total use of an area - fairness and balance of outfitted vs. private use.
- resource concerns: soil/water issues, trail issues, T&E conflicts, noxious weed concerns, etc. etc. Include WME standards for wilderness where appropriate (we'd have to finish this work guys!).
- landscape assessment/FP DFC parameters: does the use fit within the DFC for the area derived from landscape assessments or current MA direction?

Has a specific analysis been completed for outfitted use within the landscape assessments? How does this proposal fit within the findings of that analysis?

- other legal mandates.

If you have been able to successfully document (again - we might opt to develop a checklist/fill in the blanks type of form for this exercise) that there are no overriding resource or social concerns, there appears to be a valid need and the proposed use fits within the prescriptions contained for outfitted use from landscape assessments - then you would proceed into the next phase: prospectus. (WE MAY WANT TO CONSIDER LACK OF LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT DIRECTION FOR OUTFITTED USE HERE AS A FATAL FLAW - OR AT LEAST A SERIOUS CONSIDERATION FOR NOT CONTINUING FORWARD AT THIS POINT.) Otherwise, the decision to deny the request or expand the use would be documented consistently district to district using an expanded version of the above criteria.

PROSPECTUS PROCESS AND CRITERIA:

Under most situations a prospectus would be sent to all existing and interested outfitters - once the analysis outlined in the above steps indicate a new use is appropriate. In rare situations - (we'll need to define what those are, for consistency's sake) additional temporary days may be allocated to an existing permittee without going through the prospectus process.

The Forest will develop a canned prospectus letter and protocol for advertisement and distribution - to be fair to all prospective respondents. The criteria will be used to evaluate and select the best qualified applicant. We should view this process much like a job application process - seeking information which allows us to choose the best candidate. Documentation of each applicant's qualifications must be objective and complete - in anticipation of challenges by those who were not selected.

Primary evaluation criteria we'll use:

- 1) Demonstrated qualifications/training specific to the type of service being requested/offered.
 - * Training, licensing, and cumulative activity specific experience.
 - * Past performance and service records (must be satisfactory).
- 2) Demonstrated financial capability and basic manual requirements (e.g. base facilities for day use operations, ability to obtain insurance, etc.)
- 3) Proposals for operating "light on the land" types of businesses, ability to practice and teach LNT principles, and provide this sort of land ethic and natural resource education to the public.
- 4) Administrative complications and ability to cost effectively administer new permits.

* Existing permittees who are as equally qualified as other applicants will be given first priority for additional days. (The minimum or no net gain in permits theory). An exception to this may be when there appears to be a blatant "monopoly" for a certain type of service, and additional permittees would give the public more price options.

* The District must be able to commit to at least two years of monitoring. The new activity would be evaluated for problems associated with resource issues, social conflicts/overuse, general performance and for overall service to the public, and compliance with overall direction for outfitted uses through landscape assessments. Without this commitment - no new permits/uses will be entertained.

Once this review is completed - the new use may be awarded to either an existing outfitter, or a new permittee. In either case, the use would be temporary for a minimum of two years to allow for monitoring and evaluation. It would be made very clear in the prospectus that we have no obligation to renew permits, and that conversion to priority permits is very conditional. In the event that no landscape assessment work has been done to look at the cumulative effects of outfitted use - permits would remain temporary until that analysis was complete.

The last step:

Following a minimum two year monitoring and evaluation period, permits and uses that prove to be satisfactory, with no obvious problems or conflicts with all evaluation criteria and resource/need issues may be considered for conversion to priority permits, with completion of the appropriate NEPA review and decision.

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS:

* We have no comprehensive landscape assessment work at this point which addresses outfitter capacities or appropriate mix of uses.

* Our Forest plan direction is very non specific about the capacities or limits appropriate for any outfitted use except hunting. It prescribes us to establish that direction through "area analysis".

* We may want to evaluate the appropriateness of allowing additional permitted uses (temporary permits only) while we proceed with some level of analysis which addresses overall outfitted capacities for different activities through each landscape assessment.

