

---

# Appendix L

## Special Recreation Permit Program Overview



# APPENDIX L

## SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT PROGRAM

### OVERVIEW

---

The BLM will evaluate all commercial, competitive, and organized group special recreation permit (SRP) proposals on a case-by-case basis, and their approval or disapproval will be at the discretion of the authorized officer. All SRPs are considered undertakings under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Permit approval is dependent on conformance with all applicable land use planning documents and environmental review in accordance with NEPA. All existing permits will be analyzed for conformance to the Land Use Plan Revision.

In order to provide good customer service, to reduce unnecessary application submissions, and to ensure consistent consideration of permit proposals, all new SRP proposals will be evaluated using the process described below. The BLM will complete additional implementation guidance for activities in the GJFO, and this will provide applicants with specific information including but not limited to application deadlines, timelines for processing, application package requirements, fees, use reporting, and penalties.

#### I. PERMIT PROCESS

##### Pre-Application Consultation

The BLM will use a pre-application consultation to determine whether an SRP is required and allowed, and if so, what type of permit is required. Proposals will be evaluated to determine whether they are consistent with recreation objectives; whether the opportunity is already available under an existing permit; whether there is adequate market competition; and whether the event would create conflict with the public and/or other existing permitted activities; among other factors. Additionally, during the pre-application consultation, permit proposals will be classified using the classification criteria described below. Once a class determination is made and the type of permit (competitive,

organized, or commercial) is established, the following guidelines and administration practices will apply:

1. **Commercial Administration:** If a proposed activity conforms to the BLM's land use planning decisions, will not exceed the carrying capacity of the proposed area, and is within the deadlines described in the GJFO permit policy, the applicant will be asked to fulfill all the required SRP application package requirements and pay applicable fees.
2. **Competitive Event Administration:** If a proposed activity conforms to the BLM's land use planning decisions and is submitted at least 180 days prior to the event date, the applicant will be asked to fulfill all the required SRP application package requirements and pay applicable fees.
3. **Vending:** If a proposed activity conforms to the BLM's land use planning decisions, will be held in conjunction with a competitive event sponsored by an organized group, and the proposal is submitted at least 180 days prior to the event date, the applicant will be asked to fill out the required paperwork and pay applicable fees.
4. **Organized Group Permit Administration:** Organized group/event permits are for group outdoor recreational activities or events that are neither commercial nor competitive. The authorized officer determines when a permit is required on the basis of planning decisions, resource concerns, user conflicts, public health and safety, and/or the need for monitoring.

Organized groups above the group size limit of 12\* in the WSAs and lands with wilderness characteristics or above 25 in the remaining GJFO at a single location for more than two hours are required to contact the BLM prior to their event to determine whether an SRP is required. After reviewing the activity and location with the organizers, the BLM will determine whether or not a permit is required (see Section I.3, Matrix for Determining Need for Organized Group SRP). If a permit is not required, the BLM may document this determination in the form of a *Letter of Agreement*.

### **General Permit Administration**

All permit administration will be done in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), BLM Manual: H-2930-1-Recreation Permit Administration, BLM Colorado State SRP Handbook, and all associated BLM SRP instruction memoranda (IMs) and information bulletins (IBs).

## **2. APPLICATION EVALUATION**

The authorized officer will evaluate the application using the permit application review criteria listed below. The criteria include specific objectives identified in

the land use plan for recreation management areas. The issuance or denial of SRPs will be made in accordance with these criteria:

### **Permit Application Review Criteria**

Permit proposals described in business and operating plans will be evaluated using the following criteria. These criteria establish an objective framework for the evaluation of SRP applications. The authorized officer will use any or all of the criteria to approve or deny a permit (subject to potential modifications):

1. **Compliance History:** Applicant must be in compliance, and have a history of compliance, with local, State and Federal regulations. Applicant or authorized representatives must not have been convicted of a Federal, State, or local violation in connection with the proposed activities within the last three years.
2. **Safety and Safety History:** Applicant must demonstrate that they have a history of providing an acceptable level of safety for clients and the affected public.
3. **Consistency with Land Use Planning documents:** Proposals will be evaluated for consistency with current planning documents, including but not limited to the most current revision of the GJFO resource management plan and other applicable implementation plans. All activities in the wilderness study areas must be consistent with BLM Manual 6330, Management of Wilderness Study Areas.
4. **Conflicts:** Permits will not be issued in areas where conflicts exist between permittees or between permittees and the public or landowners. Valid conflicts include but are not limited to the following:
  - Overlapping use areas where the same type of use is currently permitted
  - Conflicts with livestock grazing
  - Limited public land ownership and/or related access
  - Camps; location, number, and distance between camps
  - Types of activities permitted
  - Overcrowding and/or use levels during specific time periods, supporting infrastructure at capacity
  - Enforcement/compliance problems
  - Improper conduct by permittee or employees
  - Unacceptable resource impacts
5. **Diversity of Services:** Applicants must demonstrate that their activity will enhance the diversity of recreational opportunities available for visitors and that the services are needed by the public.

6. **Low Percentage of BLM Public Lands:** Applications may be refused where public lands comprise a low percentage of the total area and recreational management goals are already being met.
7. **Adjoining Lands and Joint Permits:** Preference will not be given to applicants who own or lease private land adjacent to BLM public lands. Preference will not be given to permittees that have a joint permit issued by another land management agency.

These criteria are a means to analyze applications and offset potential problems. Many complex issues are best addressed through an ongoing dialogue between the permittees and the BLM.

If the proposal meets the application review criteria, the appropriate NEPA document will be completed. Permits may be denied as a result of issues identified during the NEPA process. Any stipulations identified during the NEPA process will be included on approved permits.

### 3. **MATRIX FOR DETERMINING NEED FOR AN ORGANIZED GROUP SRP**

Organized Group SRPs are for group outdoor recreational activities or events that are neither commercial nor competitive. The authorized officer determines when a permit is required on the basis of planning decisions, resource concerns, user conflicts, public health and safety, and/or the need for monitoring. This matrix is to guide a decision process to determine whether a SRP is needed. When determining if an SRP is needed, first determine if the activity is recreational. If it is not recreational, it may need a lands permit. Second, determine if the proposal is consistent with recreation program goals and objectives. If the proposal is not consistent with recreation program goals and objectives, the proposal should be denied. If the proposal is recreational and it is consistent with recreation program goals and objectives, consider the criteria in the matrix to help determine if a permit is needed. If a permit is not needed, consider using a Letter of Agreement to document that if the outing is conducted as proposed, a permit is not needed.

Criteria	Decision Guidance		
	Permit Not Required	Permit Required	Deny as proposed
Is the use appropriate to the site? Is there a management concern for cultural or natural resources or facilities on public land?	Yes; site very conducive to the proposed use; provided for in planning.	Site is appropriate for group size and activity; not specifically provided for in plan.	No; site is not appropriate for use as proposed; does not conform with recreation planning goals; violates ROS class or experience prescriptions.
Is monitoring needed?	Nothing beyond one simple site visit.	Monitoring beyond a one-time site visit is required.	Long term monitoring of one or more resources is required.
Are there any health and safety concerns?	None	The health and safety of event participants	Unmitigated, high risk to human health and safety;

Criteria	Decision Guidance		
	Permit Not Required	Permit Required	Deny as proposed
		or other public land users may be jeopardized.	unreasonable risk, especially to non-participants.
Is bonding desirable to cover reclamation or damage to government property or resources?	No	Bonding is desirable or required.	
Is insurance desirable to protect the U.S. Government from claims by group participants or third parties?	No, liability exposure is negligible.	Insurance is desirable due to possible claims for personal injury or property damage.	
Are special services required, such as law enforcement, fire protection, exclusive use of public lands, reserved sites, etc?	No	Yes	

#### 4. DETERMINING PERMIT CLASSIFICATION

The purpose of classifying SRPs is to screen proposals to ensure they are consistent with and support planning objectives.

All permit proposals will be evaluated using the classification criteria in Table I.1 and will be assigned to one of the classes in the classification matrix (Table I.2). The classification criteria table includes factors to determine the potential impacts to resources as a result of the proposed activities. Each factor is evaluated as either present or not present or along a continuum ranging from low to moderate or high for each resource.

After permit proposals have been evaluated using the classification criteria table, the results will be applied to the classification matrix to determine whether the proposal is either Class I (low impact), Class II (medium impact), Class III (moderate impact), or Class IV (high impact). Different proposed activities and outings will have different impacts to the various resources. Not all proposed activities will clearly be classified as I, II, III, or IV. In many situations, there will be one or two resources where impacts are higher than impacts to the other resources. In these cases, the BLM may deny the application, require modification to the proposal, or mitigate the resource concern through permit stipulations.

**Table. Permit Classification Criteria**

Resource		Anticipated Impact	Description of Impact
Wildlife	Visual	No	Artificial lighting system will not be used or will be less than 1000 candle power.
		Yes	Artificial lighting system will be 1000 candle power or greater.
	Audio	No	A loudspeaker or other broadcasting device will not be used.
		Yes	A loudspeaker or other broadcasting device will be used.
Water Quality		No	Proposed activity will not fall within a water quality impaired stream segment or won't affect stream.
		Yes	Proposed activity will fall within a water quality impaired stream segment, and the activity would affect the stream.
Cultural Sensitivity Zones		Low	Proposed activity will be within area classified as low in the Class I cultural survey.
		Moderate	Proposed activity will be within area classified as medium in the Class I cultural survey.
		High	Proposed activity will be within area classified as high in the Class I cultural survey.
Paleontological		Low	Surface geology consists of PFYC Class 1-3 formations.
		Moderate	Surface geology consists of PFYC Class 4-5 formations.
		High	Known vertebrate fossil site(s) can be seen.
Soils/Vegetation		Low	Site and associated features demonstrate resilience and resistance to anticipated activity or are sufficiently disturbed that they would not be affected.
		Moderate	Site and associated features demonstrate some ability to resist/recover from impacts.
		High	Site and associated features demonstrate limited ability to resist/recover from impacts.
Desert Shrub/Saltbush Vegetation Type		Low	Proposed activity will be outside of desert shrub/saltbush community.
		Moderate	Proposed activity will be within desert shrub/saltbush community but outside intact desert shrub/saltbush vegetation.
		High	Proposed activity will be within intact desert shrub/saltbush vegetation.
Riparian Vegetation, Perennial Waters, Seeps and Springs		Low	Proposed activity will be more than 100 meters from the edge of riparian vegetation and wetlands.
		Moderate	Proposed activity will include use within 100 meters of riparian vegetation on designated trails that cross riparian vegetation or camping at designated campsites.
		High	Proposed activity will include use within riparian vegetation off designated trails or outside designated campsites.

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Anticipated Impact</b>	<b>Description of Impact</b>
<b>Bighorn Sheep</b>	Low	Proposed activity will be outside bighorn sheep production and summer concentration areas.
	Moderate	Proposed activity will be outside bighorn sheep production areas and within summer concentration areas.
	High	Proposed activity will be within bighorn sheep production areas.
<b>Special Status Species (Colorado Hookless Cactus, Special Status Raptors, Kit Fox, Bats, Prairie Dogs, Gunnison Sage-Grouse, DeBeque phacelia and Parachute penstemon)</b>	Low	Proposed activity will be greater than 200 meters from sensitive species.
	Moderate	Proposed activity will be greater than 100 meters from sensitive species.
	High	Proposed activity will be less than 100 meters from sensitive species.
<b>Timing for Wildlife</b>	Low	Proposed activity will not occur between November 1 and April 30 or between May 15 and July 15.
	Moderate	Proposed activity will occur between November 1 and April 30 or between May 15 and July 15 and will not affect wildlife.
	High	Proposed activity will occur between November 1 and April 30 or between May 15 and July 15 and will affect wildlife.
<b>Within Existing Disturbance (Designated Routes, Staging Areas, Designated Campsites, etc.)</b>	Low	< 5 acres
	Moderate	5 to 40 acres
	High	> 40 acres
<b>Duration of Use</b>	Low	One day or less
	Moderate	Two to six days
	High	> Six days
<b>Anticipated Number of Participants</b>	Low	< 12
	Moderate	13-25
	High	25+
<b>Anticipated Number of Vehicles</b>	Low	1-6
	Moderate	6-10
	High	10+
<b>Competitive Event</b>	Yes	The event or activity will be competitive in nature.
	No	The event or activity will be noncompetitive.
<b>Motorized/Mechanized Support</b>	Yes	Vehicles or other mechanized equipment will be required to support activity.
	No	No vehicles or other mechanized equipment will be required.

Resource	Anticipated Impact	Description of Impact
<b>BLM Monitoring and Inspection Requirements</b>	Low	No significant pre- or post-permit oversight activities will be required
	Moderate	Pre- or post-permit activities will require up to eight hours of BLM oversight.
	High	Pre- or post-permit activities will require more than eight hours of BLM oversight.

**Table. Permit Classification Matrix  
Evaluation Factors**

	Permit Class			
	I	II	III*	IV*
<b>Wildlife (Visual)</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Wildlife (Audio)</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Water Quality</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Cultural</b>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
<b>Paleontological</b>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
<b>Soils/Vegetation</b>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
<b>Desert Shrub/Saltbush Vegetation</b>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
<b>Riparian Vegetation</b>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
<b>Bighorn Sheep</b>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
<b>Sensitive Species</b>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
<b>Timing for Wildlife</b>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
<b>Within Existing Disturbance</b>	Low	Low	Moderate	High
<b>Duration of Use</b>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
<b>Anticipated Number of Participants</b>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
<b>Anticipated Number of Vehicles</b>	Low	Low	Moderate	High
<b>Competitive Event</b>	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Motorized Support</b>	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring and Inspection Requirements</b>	Low	Low	Moderate	High

*\*Class III and IV events are more likely to require cost recovery, because these events will probably need more than 50 hours of BLM staff time for permit administration.*