

REVISED SPECIAL USE PERMIT FEES FOR COMMERCIAL GUIDING, OUTFITTING, AND TRANSPORTING OPERATIONS ON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES IN ALASKA

Background

The Service began a review of its recreational and commercial use fee programs following a November 1984, Inspector General's Audit Report that found the Service was not collecting fees that were commensurate with the value of the privilege authorized. As a result of the review, Region 7 published a Federal Register notice on May 31, 1991, to solicit public comment on proposed revision of special use permit fees charged to commercial guides, outfitters, and transporters of refuges in Alaska. The proposed alternative in the notice, to be consistent with other federal agency fees in Alaska, based fees on 3 percent of the adjusted gross income derived from commercial activities authorized on refuge lands. Thirty-five comments were received from individuals, professional organizations, and state and federal agencies.

After review and consideration of the public comments received on the proposed alternative as outlined in the Federal Register notice, Region 7 has decided not to implement that alternative. Public comments pointed out inequities in the originally proposed alternative and strongly supported a flat fee or a client use day system. A flat fee was reconsidered but was not selected because the Service believes it is not equitable to all commercial operators since it overcharges small scale operators and undercharges large scale operators. Upon further consideration, as a result of public comment, Region 7 is implementing the following fee system which is based on client use days. The specific fee for each type of client use day is based on an adjusted 3 percent of gross figure which returns approximately 1.5 - 2 percent of the typical daily rate charged to clients by commercial guides, outfitters, and transporters in Alaska.

Revised Fees

Client Use Day Fee Schedule

Fee Use	2015 through 2018 Fee/CUD	7.3 %Increase	2019 through 2021
Brown Bear Hunting on Alaska Peninsula, Becharof, Izembek and Kodiak NWRs	\$19.77	\$1.44	\$21.21
Brown Bear hunting on all other refuge areas	\$13.17	\$0.96	\$14.13
Moose and Dall Sheep Hunting	\$13.17	\$0.96	\$14.13
Hunting for all Other Species	\$6.66	\$0.49	\$7.15
Sport Fishing	\$2.65	\$0.19	\$2.84
River Floating	\$2.65	\$0.19	\$2.84
Photography, Birding, other Guided Activity	\$2.65	\$0.19	\$2.84
All Transportations Services	\$2.65	\$0.19	\$2.84
Note: There is a nonrefundable \$100.00 administrative fee charged upon issuance of a Special Use Permit. Client use day fees will be based on actual client days and will be in addition to the \$100.00 administrative fee. CUD = Client Use Day			

Commercial visitor services providers (i.e., guides, transporters, air and water taxis, etc.) are required to pay a fee for each client transported to, or accompanied on refuge lands. The fee is based on the type of activity as identified on the CUD fee schedule and is charged for each day (24 hours or portion thereof) the provider and clients are on the refuge together. For example, an air taxi operator is charged CUD fees for the days when delivering and retrieving clients to and from the refuge, but not for the days the clients remain in the refuge unaccompanied. A single CUD fee is also charged each trip where the provider transports equipment and supplies separate from the clients. If a guide uses an air taxi to transport clients, both the guide and the air taxi are

responsible for paying CUD fees if they accompany clients on the same day. When state or federal agencies hold a permit to conduct activities on a refuge, the contracted carrier is not required to pay CUD fees for project associated transportation. Commercial operators are responsible for logging their client use days and providing the information to the refuge in accordance with permit conditions.